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CHRISTIAN PERFECTION
AND
THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE

SERMONS

WITH SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

AND

THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE,

AS ELUCIDATED AND ENFORCED BY

DIVINES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

EIGHT SERMONS,

CHIEFLY PRACTICAL,

WITH SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

BY THE

REV. D. DAVIES, M.A.

SOMETIME RECTOR OF CLAVERTON.

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PREFACE.

THE importance of cultivating what has been termed "The Higher Religious Life," is acknowledged by many who have no real desire to enter seriously on the task. At a time when infidels boldly affirm that "there is not a man or a woman in the whole of London whose practice accords with a belief in the threats and promises of the Christian religion," it ought, assuredly, to be the earnest endeavour of all true disciples of the Saviour to "let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven." It has often been said that the most cogent arguments in favour of our religion are to be drawn from the holy and consistent lives of its professors. If the elevated and seraphic *piety for which* some of the servants of God have

been distinguished were generally prevalent amongst us, its influence, we have reason to believe, would soon become distinctly perceptible, and the Church would assume an aspect which has not been witnessed since the apostolic age. But it is only in isolated instances that piety of a transcendent character is to be found. The doctrine of Christian Perfection, in its legitimate import, is not sufficiently understood; and the plainest texts, in which it is enunciated and enforced, are either overlooked or misinterpreted. St. Paul did not conceive that justification by faith was the whole of religion; on the contrary, in every epistle which he wrote he manifests the utmost anxiety that his brethren should aim at universal holiness, and "stand complete in all the will of God." It is evident that the apostle assigns to the Gospel a far wider range of influence, and a greater diversity of objects, than it is generally supposed to reach. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the *day of Christ;* being filled with the fruits of right-

eousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."—(Philippians i. 9-11.) Other texts, though not so full or comprehensive, teach, by implication, the same truth. The path of the just is compared to the morning light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. St. John, in his first epistle, addresses himself to those whom he styles little children, young men, and fathers; and, according to our Lord's representation, "there is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Important, then, as maturity in grace should ever be regarded, we are still to bear in mind that true faith, though weak and defective, "is in the sight of God of great price." There was much imperfection at first in our Lord's own disciples. For a long time they entertained dreams of earthly grandeur and temporal power; and, though they followed Him as the promised Messiah, yet they disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest in His kingdom. "It was not till after His Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, that their faith appeared to real advantage, and assumed a *power which it* had not possessed before. It is a

great encouragement to us that we are able thus to trace the course of the apostles from first to last, to mark their progress and growth in grace. If we had not been made acquainted with their first steps, their spiritual youth as it might be called, we might at once be disheartened by the contemplation of characters so much beyond us—of excellence which might seem unapproachable. But when we watch them from stage to stage, we learn that there are degrees of grace, and that the apostles themselves had their beginning which was not without its weaknesses and imperfections."* Many, however, there are who rest in Christian doctrines without aspiring after Christian attainments. Not that the Gospel has, in itself, any tendency to create such characters; but the corruption of men's hearts will take occasion, from some of its doctrines, to foster sentiments which are opposed to its very nature.

A worldly and inconsistent profession of religion has ever been the bane of the Church, and its direct tendency is to confirm the infidel in his unbelief. "One great motive for Christians aiming *at the utmost* perfection attainable," as an excellent

* Bishop Armstrong.

writer observes, "is, that nothing short of this is intelligible to the world. Till the Christian character is completed, none but an enlightened eye can understand its meaning or its excellence. It is so in many works of art and mechanical skill. However promising the preparations, or admirable the materials may be, yet till the work is finished, the uninstructed can see no use or beauty in it. In painting, in sculpture, in the construction of any complicated machine, no one can discern the skill of the artist, or the mechanician, at the commencement, or during the progress of the work, but he who is himself a proficient in the art. But when the machine is put together, or when the last finishing touch is given to the picture or the statue, then all can, in some degree, recognise a master's hand. Thus it is with the Christian character. None but the initiated can discern the grace that is in operation while the struggling penitent laments his miseries, and groans under the load which presses down his soul. These may be working out his full redemption; but these rude materials, and early promises of a better life, are *wholly lost upon* the world. They know nothing

of the process. It is only when the work is done, and when 'the man of God' is perfect, that the world can see that 'the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.'" *

The compiler of the annexed series of extracts is deeply convinced that the sentiments which they express are in strict harmony with the teaching of our Lord and His apostles; and he trusts that his labour, even as a gleaner in the theological field, will not have been in vain.

* Rev. Henry Woodward's *Essays*.

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"Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—St. Matt. v. 48.

"This also we wish, even your perfection."—2 Cor. xiii. 9.

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."—Phil. ii. 14, 15.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Thess. v. 22, 23.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."—Heb. vi. 1.

"The God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."—1 Peter v. 10.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."—2 Peter iii. 14.

"Some are apt to startle at the very mention of Perfection; they have entertained such humble thoughts, *not only* of human nature, but, as it

seems, of divine grace too, and evangelical righteousness, that all talk of perfection seems to them like the preaching of a new Gospel, and an obtruding upon the world a fantastic scheme of proud and pretending morality. But this fear will soon vanish when I tell such that I discourse of the perfection of men, not of angels. Religious perfection is nothing else but such a maturity of virtue as man in this life is capable of; it is nothing else but a ripe and settled habit of holiness. According to this notion he is a perfect man whose mind is pure and vigorous; whose faith is firm and steady, his love ardent and exalted, and his hope full of assurance; whose religion has in it that fervour and constancy, and his soul that tranquillity and joy which bespeak him a child of light and of the day,—'a partaker of the divine nature,' and raised above 'the corruption which is in the world through lust.'"—Rev. Dr. Lucas, 1730.

"As Christians we are quite sure that our life ought to be a state of constant advancement from one degree of goodness to another. We are commanded to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect; a precept which, as it never can be fulfilled to the letter, obviously implies a continued endeavour to advance nearer and more near to the standard of divine perfection. God ever expects a result proportioned to the means which He affords us. The indwelling and co-operation of the Holy Spirit are urged by St. Paul to *his converts, not* as a ground for supineness and

inactivity, but as a motive to fearful and trembling diligence in working out their salvation. Since no man can presume to say, at any moment of his Christian course, that he is as pious, as pure, as heavenly-minded, as he ought to be, or as he might be, it is plain that we are required by our religion, to be continually advancing in godliness. A divine original is proposed to us for our imitation, a perfect resemblance to which is indeed unattainable; but He who has proposed it to us, and is ready to assist our endeavours, may with justice expect that the copy shall be as complete as it is in our power to make it."—BISHOP BLOMFIELD.

"Christians cannot indeed attain to perfection, but it is their duty to aim at it: the perfect law is their rule and standard; the perfect holiness and love of God, their pattern; they should aim high, and seek to be perfect, even as their Father which is in heaven is perfect. . . . St. Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that they might be so filled with heavenly knowledge, holy affections and consolations, as to leave no room in their souls for error, ignorance, sin, or infidelity; but that the fulness of the divine power, grace, light, love, and joy, might wholly occupy their hearts, and that their minds might be so enlarged as to receive more and more of these blessings, till they should be filled with all the fulness of God, as His temple was with His glorious presence."—REV. T. SCOTT'S *Comment.*

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened."—St. Matthew xiii. 33.

"The whole, then, must be leavened, or at least must be in a fair way of being leavened; else the principle at work within us is not the power and living principle of Christ's kingdom: it is not Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation. 'If ye be led of the Spirit,' says St. Paul, if ye are under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, 'walk in the Spirit, and sow to the Spirit;' that is, walk as Christ would have you, and cherish those graces and dispositions which belong to the children of God. And which are they? St. Paul reckons them up in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians: among them are love, joy, peace, gentleness, and meekness. Truly Christian tempers, those tempers which are thoroughly leavened by the Spirit, are the sweetest and gentlest that can be seen. I speak from my own observation; for I have known some such persons myself, persons in whose company it was scarcely possible to be, without feeling that one was breathing the very air of Christ's kingdom. But if this perfection can be attained, every follower of Christ is bound to strive after it: and how far are they from the full growth of the Gospel, whose tempers and conversation are still unleavened! Truly, notwithstanding the progress *they may have* made, those who are only in part

leavened are still too far from the kingdom of God. . . . 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' This is the true standard which we should set before us, and endeavour to reach, the goodness, and righteousness, and loving-kindness of God, as shown to us in His blessed Son. That Son was the express image of His Father's excellency: so that the more we become like the Son, the more shall we be like the Father. But how is it possible to become like the Son of God, until our hearts, and minds, and words, and thoughts, and wishes, are fully leavened with the spirit of the Gospel, the spirit of holiness and love."—Rev. A. W. Hare.

"How much is included in the scriptural word Perfection! We do not mean by that term a righteousness without spot, or a life free from every stain, but such an ardent thirst after holiness, such an universal practice of it, and such an union of different excellences as few Christians in these days even seem to desire, much less actually to attain. It is the want of this very pressing forward to perfection that is so evident among us. Our Christianity is stunted and dwarfish. Many entertain an idea that some things which are right in themselves, and agreeable to the Word of God, are yet impossible in practice. Impossible they may be, if we are endeavouring to serve God with a divided heart, or attempting to make religion bend to our worldly interests. The real difficulty *lies in our want* of faith, which leads us to view a

thing as impossible, because it is contrary to our feelings, or contrary to some favourite worldly schemes which we wish to see accomplished at the same time."—Rev. C. Simeon.

"One positive characteristic of personal religion, perhaps its chief positive characteristic, is spiritual growth,—the growth of the individual soul 'unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' Does our religion wax stronger against temptations, more constant and fervent in prayer, as years roll on? Are our views of God and of Christ gradually enlarging and clearing, and becoming more adequate? Are they more humbling to ourselves, but at the same time more inwardly satisfactory, and consolatory than they used to be? Are besetting sins more resolutely and successfully mortified? . . . There is no growth in a life of spiritual routine, in a mechanical performance of duties however important, or a mechanical attendance upon ordinances, however sacred. There is no growth without zeal and fervour, and that sort of enthusiastic interest in religion, with which a man must take up anything, if he desires to succeed in it. There is no growth in the deliberate adoption of a low standard,—in the attempt to keep back a moiety of the heart from Christ, in consenting to go with God thus far only, and no further. There is no growth in contenting ourselves with respectability, and declining the pursuit of holiness. There is no growth without *fervent prayer* in spirit and in truth. And, finally,

there is no growth (whatever be the hopes with which we may be flattering ourselves) without continual and sincere effort."—DEAN GOULBURN.

"There is no limit to that perfection of character which we are exhorted to cultivate. We cannot imagine any point in Christian holiness where we must rest contented, and beyond which we are not at liberty to advance; for we are commanded to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect; and when we think of our resources under the dispensation in which we are placed, we shall be constrained to acknowledge that the command is appropriate. It was the desire of St. Paul for his brethren in Christ, that they might 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' In various parts of Scripture the Christian life is described as a walk. The principal ideas conveyed by the figure are motion and progress. It is not mere activity, a walking to and fro, going and returning for the mere pleasure which is found in activity. There are many who thus occupy themselves in religion, and religious pursuits. They are fond of study, of research, of speculation; and among other subjects religion is one which sometimes interests and occupies them; but they have no precise object, no definite end in view. As Christians we are professedly pursuing the path which leads to a state of perfect holiness and endless glory. If we are *really thus occupied*, we are making progress in

our course. As subjects of Christ's kingdom we shall carefully consider how our actions suit our character. Thus our religious principles will be called into daily exercise, and will be deepened as we advance in our journey. I am speaking of a Christian as he ought to be, and as he is, so far as he is under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, and acting in conformity with his avowed principles. This is the practical Christianity we should be cultivating, and which, if we possess, will prove an inward witness to the truth of our holy religion."—Rev. J. Fenn.

"We cannot perhaps better explain what is meant by growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, than by referring you to the language of St. Paul, in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians. 'For this cause,' says he, 'I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.'

"Every true Christian is already renewed after the image of God, and has received the earnest of *the Spirit in his* heart; but he ought not to be

satisfied with his present attainments. St. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians shows what he should aim at. He must never be content till he is filled with all the fulness of God. This is the great object which he must set before him and pursue, till he has actually attained it; for there is a fulness of God which He is willing to communicate to His faithful people. But how shall I describe it, or convey any adequate idea of what is meant by such an expression; and how, while endeavouring to give some explanation of it, shall I meet an objection which might be urged against the apostle's description, as if it were never seen exemplified in real life? We can only say that the true standard of a Christian is not any example in ordinary life which we may select as a specimen from those whom we esteem excellent, but the example of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in whom was transcribed the beauty of the divine holiness. The fulness of God, of which the apostle speaks, is a full imitation of Christ in all the heavenliness of His spirit, the meekness of His temper, and the sanctity of His conduct. It is a fulness of zeal for the house of God that overcomes us; a fulness of love for the brethren that would lead us to lay down our lives for their sakes; a fulness of humility that would make us willing to be of no reputation, and become the least of all; a fulness of spiritual devotion that would draw us to the throne of grace continually, and set God before us day and night; that would keep us *unmoved by temptation* and trial, because He is at

our right hand; a fulness of joy and peace in believing, accompanied with an abhorrence of what is evil, and a delight in that which is good."—Rev. S. C. Wilks, *sometime Editor of "The Christian Observer."*

THE

LAW OF CONSCIENCE.

As a due observance of the Law of Conscience forms an essential part of Christian Perfection, a few extracts in illustration of the subject are here added to the series.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."—Rom. xiv. 23.

"The word Faith in this place is put for a certain persuasion of mind that what we do may be lawfully done: so that whatever action is done by us with reasonable assurance and persuasion of the lawfulness thereof in our own consciences, is in our apostle's purpose, so far forth an action of faith. And on the other side, whatsoever action is done either directly contrary to the judgment and verdict of our own consciences, or, at least, doubtingly, and before we are in some competent measure *assured that* we may lawfully do it, that is it

which St. Paul here denieth to be of faith, and of which he pronounceth so peremptorily that it is a sin. 'He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith.' Whosoever shall enterprise the doing of anything which he verily believeth to be unlawful, or, at least, is not reasonably well persuaded of the lawfulness of it, let the thing be otherwise, and in itself indifferent, to him it is a sin. . . . There cannot be imagined a higher contempt of God than for a man to despise the sovereignty of his own conscience, which is the highest authority under heaven, as being God's most immediate deputy for the ordering of his life and ways. 'Happy is he which condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth;' but most wretched is he that alloweth himself in the practice of that which in his judgment he cannot but condemn.

"If the question be concerning the very lawfulness of the thing itself, whether it may be lawfully done or no, and the conscience stands in doubt, because reasons seem to be probable both for and against, in such a case, the person is certainly bound to forbear the doing of that thing of the lawfulness whereof he doubteth; and the reason why he ought rather to forbear than to adventure the doing of that whereof he doubteth, is, because in doubtful cases wisdom would that the safer part should be chosen. And that part is safer which if we choose, we are sure that we shall do well, than that which, if we choose, we know not but we *may do ill.* . . .

"The conscience hath this power over men's wills and actions by virtue of that unchangeable law of God which He establisheth by an ordinance of nature in our first creation, that the will of every man (which is the fountain whence all our actions immediately flow) should conform itself to the judgment of the understanding, or conscience, as to its proper and immediate rule, and yield itself to be guided thereby. So that if the understanding, through error, point out a wrong way, and the will follow it, the fault is chiefly in the understanding for misguiding the will; but if the understanding shew the right way, and the will take a wrong, then the fault is merely in the will, for not following the guide which God hath set over it."—BISHOP SANDERSON.

"There is a superior principle of reflection, or conscience, in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust; which without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially asserts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly; and which, if forcibly stopped, naturally and always goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence which shall hereafter second and affirm its own. It is by this faculty, natural to *man, that he is* a moral agent,—that he is a law to

himself; but this faculty is not to be considered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others, but as a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so."—BISHOP BUTLER.

"If you would have 'a good conscience,' you must by all means have so much light, so much knowledge of the will of God, as may regulate you, and shew you your way, may teach you how to act, and speak, and think as in His presence. We must still be seeking a nearer conformity with the known will of our God; daily redressing and ordering the affections by it; not sparing to knock off whatsoever we find irregular within, that our hearts may be polished, and brought to a right frame by that rule. And this is the daily inward work of the Christian, his great business to 'purify himself, as the Lord is pure.' The greater part of mankind little regard this; they walk by guess, having, perhaps, unenlightened consciences; yea, how many have consciences without feeling, as if seared with a hot iron; so hardened that they feel nothing. Others that know the rule of Christianity, yet study not a conscientious respect to it in all things. They cast some transient looks upon the rule and their own hearts, it may be, but they make it not their business to compare them. They have time for anything but that: they do not, with St. Paul, 'exercise themselves to have a *conscience void* of offence towards God and men.'

Think you that other things cannot be done without diligent attention, and is this a work to be done at random? No; it is the most exact and curious of all works to have the conscience right, and keep it so: as watches, or other such neat pieces of workmanship, except they be daily wound up, and skilfully handled, will quickly go wrong; yea, besides daily inspection, conscience should (as these) be sometimes taken to pieces, and more accurately cleansed; for the best kept will gather soil and dust. Sometimes a Christian should set himself to a more solemn examination of his own heart, beyond his daily search, and all little enough to have so precious a blessing as this,—'a good conscience.' They that are most diligent and vigilant find nothing to abate as superfluous, but still need more. 'The heart is to be kept with all diligence,' or above all keeping. Corruption within is ready to grow and gain upon it, if it be never so little neglected, and from without, to invade it, and get in."—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

"Men in their natural state have little or no fear of God. They are seldom prevented from giving way to their inclinations by the dread of offending God. But it is not so with the true Christian. Grace teaches him to fear sin, lest he should provoke God's anger. Hence the more he grows in holiness, the more he grows in tenderness of conscience, the more anxious he becomes on every occasion to know what the will of God is, and *the more careful* in suiting his conduct to it.

Is any scheme proposed to him? He does not listen to the crafty reasonings of men, but enquires, What says the Bible? What are the plain and positive directions of Scripture? To these he instantly submits, nor thinks himself allowed, on any pretence whatever, to disobey them. Though an object may appear in itself good and desirable, yet he does not feel himself justified in following it by means which the Word of God condemns. He dreads doing evil that good may come. Where his conscience, enlightened by Scripture, is not perfectly clear with respect to the lawfulness of any action, he takes the safe side, and prudently forbears from entering upon it. Thus he proves that the Gospel has come to his heart in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power."—Rev. S. Walker, *Truro.*

"In proportion as a man becomes an enlightened and well-instructed Christian, the rule of conscience becomes more and more nearly a perfect rule; while to a carnal, ignorant, worldly man, it is very defective. But yet, defective or not, to every one it is a rule of the very highest importance. For whatever degree of light a man has received, his conscience almost invariably sets before him a higher and better course than he is pursuing. The great practical evil is, not that conscience is itself liable to fall short of the whole truth, but that men do not follow their conscience as far as it will lead them. They do not live up to that which they *know to be* right. If they would at all times

sincerely strive to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man, there would be no fear but that the Lord would give them light as it was needed, and they would go on from strength to strength, and from grace to grace. The great advantage of this rule of conscience is, that though at any one moment it is imperfect, yet it expands as occasion requires; leading the carnally-minded into a more excellent way, and setting before the most advanced Christian something more excellent still. For with every step in the divine life its view is enlarged; it discovers new duties, and assumes a higher and holier tone; never suffering the Christian to rest with that whereunto he has attained, but continually reaching forward to that which is before, till he attains to the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus."—Rev. W. Nind.

"Every man is bound to be regulated by his own conscience. We may sin, indeed, and sin grievously, while following the dictates of our conscience; but our sin will consist, not in doing what we think to be right, but in not taking care to have our conscience better informed. Even supposing the line of conduct to be right in itself, we ought not to do it, unless we believe it to be right; 'for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' We ought to be thoroughly persuaded in our own minds: if we doubt respecting the line of duty, we should wait, and enquire, and pray, till we see our *way clear; especially* if the doubt have respect to

the morality of the action. There may be doubts about some particular circumstances which can never be fully resolved; and in them we must follow the line which expediency prescribes; but when the duty can by any means be ascertained, then we should exert ourselves to the uttermost to learn the will of God, and afterwards follow the path which we apprehend He will approve. And here it may be useful to observe that the first testimony of conscience is generally the most just, and most to be depended on. We may by reasonings bewilder conscience, so that it shall not know what testimony to give; or we may, by leaning to the side of our passions, or our interests, bias it to give a directly contrary testimony to that which it first suggested: it is, therefore, of peculiar importance to bear in mind our first impressions; for though they may not be always right, and may be corrected by the acquisition of further light and knowledge, yet they may be always considered as more pure and impartial, and, therefore, as deserving more peculiar attention. Though a scrupulous conscience is an evil to be lamented, yet a tender conscience is, above all things, to be desired: it should be kept tender, even as the apple of our eye. For this purpose we ought continually to consult its records. Unobserved by us, it notices, from time to time, the quality of our actions, and frequently assigns them a very different character from that which a common observer would imagine them to bear. But if we neglect to consult its *records, they* become gradually fainter, till they

are almost wholly effaced. Scarcely an hour, and certainly not a day should ever pass, without our retiring, as it were, to converse with it. Thus, as the apostle says, we should 'examine ourselves, and prove our own selves;' nay, more, we should beg of God to search and try, not our ways only, but our inmost thoughts and desires, that so we may have a fuller knowledge of ourselves, and 'keep a conscience void of offence towards God and men.'" —Rev. C. Simeon.

SERMONS.

As the following Discourses are chiefly of a practical character, the writer is encouraged to hope that they may form no unsuitable appendage to the series of Extracts now brought to a conclusion. Some valuable thoughts which he has ventured to incorporate with his own observations are, in most instances, assigned to their proper authors. It is possible, however, that ideas may be occasionally introduced which he is now unable to trace to their origin, or to mark by inverted commas, as they are seldom expressed precisely in the words of the writers to whom he may be indebted.

SERMON I.

Romans v. 19.

"AS BY ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE MANY WERE MADE SINNERS, SO BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE SHALL MANY BE MADE RIGHTEOUS."

THE happiness of Adam in Paradise was not absolutely perfect. If he had retained his original righteousness a far more exalted destiny would have awaited him.* After an appointed time he would have passed, without dying, to the supreme felicity of God's immediate presence, with only such an alteration in the nature of the body as might render it suited to the glorified state, and fit to appear in the society of the angelic host. We know that Enoch and Elijah were thus translated from earth to heaven; and such, we have reason to believe, would have been the case with Adam and all his descendants had he, as their representative,

* SCOTT'S *Comment.* Gen. i. 25.

preserved his integrity and faithfulness. On this point, however, the sacred writers give no distinct information. What we have now to consider is the terrible reality of our fallen state, and the means which God has appointed for our recovery. By one act of disobedience our first parents forfeited their inheritance, and brought ruin upon themselves and their posterity. Severe as their punishment may be deemed, a little reflection will enable us to perceive the peculiar aggravation of their offence. It being the will of God that they should be placed in a state of trial, it was necessary that some test of their fidelity and obedience to Him as the great Governor of the universe should be appointed. They were, therefore, required to abstain from eating the fruit of one tree. The apparent insignificance of the prohibition, though it has often excited the sneers of the infidel, did, in fact, heighten the ingratitude and criminality of the offenders. Regardless of all considerations of duty or interest, they listened to the suggestions of their malevolent adversary, and became dissatisfied with their lot. In the expectation of raising themselves to superior dignity they presumptuously violated the easy command which had been given them. How, then, could their disobedience be regarded in any other light than that of wilful rebellion against their almighty Creator, and a refusal to acknowledge His authority over them? No sooner had they tasted the forbidden fruit than a consciousness of guilt flashed across their minds, *and they endeavoured* to hide themselves from the

presence of the Lord amidst the trees of the garden. Their anguish, though not attended with godly sorrow, must have been dreadful beyond expression. Death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal was included in the sentence denounced against them; and as the human nature became thus corrupted in its root, the effects of their transgression have extended to the bodies and souls of their descendants. Our first father sinned, and handed down to his guilty offspring care, sorrow, and toil. The whole world bears undeniable evidence of being under the displeasure of God. "In Adam all die," and in Adam all are depraved. We are not, however, to imagine that we are innocent sufferers for the sin of another, and that we ought not to be involved in his ruin. By our own acts of disobedience we have incurred the same penalty and condemnation. Instead of seeking our happiness in the paths of holiness, and in the favour of God, we too often follow the devices and desires of our own hearts; and this taint of original sin, as our Church teaches us, "is the fault and corruption of every one that is born into the world." Go where we will, from one end of the earth to another, we shall everywhere find it. How early does this natural depravity show itself in children! We may sometines observe, in the feeble infant, violence of temper, bursts of passion, fretfulness, and self-will. After reason has begun to dawn, scarcely can the most prudent and vigilant care of the parent restrain its wayward dispositions; and, where the *restraint is wanting*, how readily does it break out

into the commission of every sin of which its years are capable! In youth and manhood the case is not improved, and the testimony of Scripture respecting our fallen race is strictly true, "They are all gone out of the way; they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none righteous, no not one." Such is man in his natural state. We need not spend any time or labour in teaching him to do what is wrong. Left to himself he will assuredly choose the path of disobedience; but if we strive to teach him to serve God, to love his Saviour, to do His will, and to walk in the ways of holiness, we shall find that this is a work of great difficulty, nay, actually impossible unless God touches the heart, and changes it by His grace. We admit, indeed, that the taint of original sin does not manifest itself with equal virulence in all. The natural dispositions in many are amiable and lovely; such, for instance, as the simplicity and sweetness of temper which we see in some children, and often in persons of riper years. These dispositions appear to have adorned the young ruler who came to our Lord, and eagerly enquired what good thing he must do that he might inherit eternal life. Such dispositions, so far as they tend to promote our present happiness, are highly to be commended; and, therefore, we read that when Jesus saw him He loved him; and yet this young man, with all his amiableness of character came short of the kingdom of God. He preferred his worldly possessions *and his own* ease to the service of his Saviour. *The outward* difference which exists between one

man and another is owing to the restraining hand of God; and if human nature were left entirely to itself, without any restraint from education, or religion, and many other things which serve to keep it within bounds, its corruption would appear in the same dark and terrific characters in all.* If the seeds of evil seem to be dormant in some, or do not spring up with the same luxuriance as in others, it is because they are not called forth by suitable circumstances and temptations, or because they are checked in their growth by providential restraints. It is manifest, then, that we are all tainted with a corrupt nature in consequence of the first man's disobedience; and wretched would have been our lot for ever, if God had not provided a remedy for the evils of the fall.

Now, to thoughtful minds it may seem an inexplicable mystery that such a catastrophe should have been permitted to occur. My brethren, we are not competent in our present state to form any judgment of God's moral government; but we may rest assured that the entrance of sin and misery into our world will lead ultimately to a stupendous predominance of happiness throughout the universe. "God is love," and "his mercy endureth for ever;" but if there had been no moral evil in any part of His creation, we do not see how these divine attributes could have been exhibited in their full lustre. It may be difficult to understand why the transgression of one man should

* Note A.

involve so many millions in its consequences. But we see that the evil does exist, and it is not for us to enquire why, or wherefore. The question is, Can we escape from the state of ruin in which we find ourselves? It is clear that we are wholly incapable of saving ourselves, and there is only one method of deliverance made known to us. God does not consult us, or ask our approbation of His plans. He calls us not to give our opinion, but joyfully to accept His proferred mercy through Christ. To dispute, or sit in judgment on His dispensations, or to find fault because we are made to suffer through Adam's sin, is presumptuous and vain. For what is our true condition? It has been well observed that we are like shipwrecked persons ready to perish in the great deep. When the ship is just on the point of sinking, would that be a time to complain that our lives were made to depend on the skill of the captain?—and that we ought not to have been wrecked because the management of the vessel had not been committed to ourselves; or would it be wise, amidst the roaring of the waves, to enquire why God, when He formed the world, should have placed a rock in that particular situation, though He foresaw that our ship would certainly be wrecked upon it? All such thoughts at such a time would be foolish and utterly useless. Our only feelings under such circumstances would be, "How shall I be saved from perishing?" and if we saw a ship hastening towards *us for our preservation*, we should be wholly occupied *in contriving* how we might secure the aid *offered to us.*

This, I say, is precisely our case. We are lost in Adam, but our merciful God and Father who foresaw that we should be wrecked in him, has provided an ark of salvation for us, and invites us all to enter in. We are not left to perish in hopeless misery. The evil which we inherit from Adam is reversed in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is done away, and the contrary blessings are imparted. This truth is clearly set forth in the words of my text. In Adam we have the imputation of guilt; from Christ the imputation of righteousness. From Adam we inherit condemnation and death; from our blessed Redeemer we derive pardon, peace, and life eternal. In His atoning sacrifice the evil effects of man's rebellion and sin have their mighty counterpoise.* The efficacy of that one offering is omnipotent, and its value is infinite. Thus, by the obedience of one many are made righteous. Hence He is called "the second Adam, the Lord from heaven." He stands in the same relation to all true believers as that in which Adam stood to the whole human race. Let us endeavour fully to understand this glorious truth of our religion. The apostle would here teach us that as from the first Adam we derive a corrupted nature, so from the second Adam, our incarnate Lord, we derive a principle of real holiness by which we may please God, and be made meet for His heavenly kingdom. On the one hand we see man fallen, guilty, debased by sin, a slave to evil passions, lying under the wrath of God, and

* Note B.

exposed to eternal misery. On the other side we behold him, through the Gospel, recovered, exalted, and raised to a far more glorious Paradise than Adam lost. Indeed, no language can convey any adequate idea of the happiness which awaits God's faithful people in a better world. "The crown of glory that fadeth not away;" a throne and a mansion in the heavens are the everlasting possessions which they now hope for, and in the prospect of which, they sometimes experience a joy which cannot be expressed. May we all be enabled to testify our acceptance of God's offered grace by fleeing for refuge to the hope that is set before us! Again I would say, it is vain to ask why was Adam permitted to fall? With such a question we have nothing to do. We know and feel that we are involved in his ruin, that we are partakers in the consequences of his fall, that sorrow and death attend our steps; and finding ourselves placed in these fearful circumstances, our great concern should be to accept the offer of deliverance on God's own terms. Salvation is now proclaimed to all penitent sinners. "The tree of life may be said to grow in the midst of us; and no cherubim with flaming swords obstruct our way to it; on the contrary all the angels in heaven rejoice at our approach to it, and God Himself, even our Father, invites and entreats us to partake of its life-giving fruits." Our sins and iniquities are remembered no more, and we are assured that we shall never come into condemnation. In this world, indeed, we *must still* expect to see and to feel the effects of

Adam's fall. We have, all of us, our sorrows and our trials of some kind or other to pass through. But if we have fled to the appointed refuge, we shall be safe and happy whatever may befall us. Troubles may come, sickness may come, and death may come, but who can separate us from the love of Christ? Who can lay any thing to our charge if we are His true disciples? While we rely on His merits, and strive to follow the example of His holiness, being nourished by the food provided for us in His Word and ordinances, we shall assuredly possess "the blessed hope of everlasting life." O brethren, let us not rest till we experience the truth of the Gospel in all its divine efficacy. I say in all its divine efficacy, for it is of mighty influence when cordially received. It is not a mere sentiment, a cold and barren opinion entertained without any feeling of admiration or love, but a vital principle of holiness implanted in the heart, and producing its effects on the whole of the conduct. Too many are satisfied with a mere outward profession, with a general confession of their unworthiness, and of their hope in Christ, while they overlook the plainest declarations of the Word of God on the necessity of personal holiness. A mistake here may be attended with fearful consequences. How anxiously should we enquire whether religion has ever had its due influence upon us or not? If we daily seek communion with God by earnest prayer, and delight in the ordinances of His house, if we have a growing love of holiness and hatred of sin, *in a word, if* we find that our affections are drawn

to "things that are above," and not utterly engrossed by the cares, or pleasures, or business of life, then may we, without presumption, believe that the curse which we inherit from Adam is, in our case, reversed, and that in due time we shall enter on the possession of an eternal inheritance in the heavens.

SERMON II.

Revelation iii. 21.

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, EVEN AS I ALSO OVERCAME, AND AM SET DOWN WITH MY FATHER IN HIS THRONE."

In many passages of Scripture the Christian life is compared to a warfare. We have difficulties to encounter, and formidable enemies to overcome. Since the fall the course of this world has been in opposition to God and holiness. Satan is now its prince and ruler, and we have all a depraved and corrupt nature, which makes us ready to do evil. Whatever, then, allures and draws out that evil nature, whether it be something in our circumstances, or in our company, or in our worldly calling, we must overcome. At our confirmation we professed to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants, and we solemnly promised to fight under *His banner against* the world, the flesh, and the

devil. Such is the warfare in which we are engaged; and whatever, in our several stations, hinders us from being Christians indeed, that we must steadily resist. The first disciples of our Lord were required to leave their families and homes, and to follow Him amidst sufferings, reproach, and persecution. Though the outward circumstances of the Church are changed, the principles of the Christian religion are still the same. We are still commanded to take up our cross, and to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." It is vain to expect the conqueror's reward, if we refuse to submit to the conqueror's toil and self-denial. The great law of the contest is that we must overcome. It will be of no avail to gain a little advantage over our adversaries if, on the whole, we suffer them to prevail against us. It will not profit us to give up some sins, and retain others; to change a few of our evil habits and remain the same in heart. Everything that is opposed to the authority of our heavenly Master must be sacrificed. In this respect we are as much on our trial as our first parents were in Paradise. Everything sinful must be renounced; and even the most innocent and necessary things must be given up rather than that we should be drawn by them into any act of disobedience or disloyalty to our King and Saviour. Many, however, forget their baptismal vows, and are unwilling to follow Christ on His own terms. They offer no resistance to their enemies, because they are not conscious *of any enemy* being near; but when we are en-

lightened to perceive things as they really are, in what a fearful state of danger do we find ourselves! We then begin to "fight the good fight of faith" in right earnest, resolved, by God's grace, to sacrifice each besetting sin, to renounce our allegiance to Satan, and to overcome the world, with all its snares and temptations: I say, resolved by God's grace to do so, for our own strength is perfect weakness. Were we left to ourselves in the struggle we should soon be overcome, but we are not sent forth in our own strength, for the Lord of Hosts is on our side, and He affords us all needful succour. Whatever enemies may be arrayed against us, our final triumph is certain. Human nature, though weak in itself, is strong and irresistible by the Spirit of God. Every precept of the Gospel involves in it a promise of aid to enable us to fulfil its demands; and whatever might have been the attainments of the first followers of our Lord, the same power which made them victorious is ready to act for us. He, under whose banner we are called to fight, has all power in heaven and in earth, and He knows our every want. He was tempted like as we are, and submitted to bitter sufferings, and the death of the cross, that He might obtain eternal redemption for us. What He now offers is an unfading inheritance in heaven, a blessing which seems afar off, but of which He bestows the earnest by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in our hearts. He adopts us into God's family, speaks peace to our consciences, imparts a joy which the world cannot *give, and bids us* wait patiently for the remainder:

And who would not willingly submit to a little self-denial and suffering, in order to secure the prize which is set before us? "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee," said one of His apostles, "what shall we have therefore?" What shall we gain by the sacrifices we have made? The answer was, that they should have a hundred-fold now, in the spiritual consolations which would be imparted to them; and in the world to come, life eternal. This declaration of our Lord, as well as His promise in the text, may, at first sight, appear to be at variance with some other passages of Scripture, in which eternal life is described as a free gift bestowed upon us for the merits' sake of our Redeemer. But there can be no real contradiction between one part of God's Word and another. Our Lord Himself told His disciples that after they had done all that was required of them, they were to say they were unprofitable servants, inasmuch as their holiest actions were not free from imperfection. The bliss of heaven is bestowed upon us, not as a reward of debt which we can justly claim at the hands of the Almighty, but only as a reward of grace, the effect of His overflowing bounty and love in Christ to those who by their sins had forfeited His favour. The obedience of merit belongs to our Lord and Saviour alone, who, as our surety, fulfilled every demand of the divine law, and suffered the penalties which we had deserved. What is required of us is the obedience of gratitude. "Greater love hath no *man than this,*" says He, "that a man lay down

his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit." The Gospel consists of two parts,—doctrine and practice, just as a house consists of a foundation, and a superstructure; but the two things must not be confounded together.* "By grace are ye saved through faith," says St. Paul, "not of works less any man should boast;" and yet the same apostle exhorts us to be careful to "maintain good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The righteousness of Christ is the only solid foundation on which we can rest our hopes; and good works are the superstructure by which we prove our connection with Him as the Rock of our salvation; and then only is our faith available when it produces a desire after universal holiness.

Bearing this distinction in mind, let me now proceed to consider the description given in my text of the future happiness of all who are "Christ's faithful soldiers and servants." In consequence of their union with Him as the second Adam, they are raised to a state of dignity and glory above that of the angelic host. The King of kings has become one of us, a member of the human family, and all His true followers are joint heirs with Him in His riches and possessions. "He took not on him the nature of angels," but He appeared among the seed of Abraham, and by His wonderful condescension, He has for ever en-

* Note C.

nobled our race. To all who overcome in the conflict He will grant to sit with Him in His throne, even as He also overcame, and is set down with His Father in His throne. There are other texts in which the same idea is expressed—"If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) "There shall be no night there; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xxii. 5.) The full meaning of these words cannot now be understood by us, but they seem to indicate the possession of regal dignities held in subordination to the great Ruler of the universe. The saints, in their risen bodies, may, like the angels, be appointed to principalities and dominions "in the heavenly places." It is evident, from several expressions in the Gospels and Epistles, that a trust will be committed to them, according to their respective attainments in grace and holiness; and if we thoughtfully consider what is written, we shall look at God's inconceivably vast creation, as affording spheres innumerable for doing His will in ways which He will appoint, but which we cannot at present comprehend.*

You see then, brethren, what will be the final result of true faith in Christ as our Redeemer, and to what unspeakable blessedness our spiritual conflicts are leading us. The work of regeneration in the soul of man is, indeed, something very wonderful. "It is a new power implanted within us,

* *Archdeacon* Hone *on The State of* Future Blessedness.

opening itself out by degrees,—showing its divine nature daily, and leading us to think to what a far higher state of excellence it may be advanced by being placed in a better world. We feel that it is something which is only in its infancy,—excellent and heavenly in its kind, but now only manifesting the beginning of its strength. As we say of newly-discovered powers in the physical world that we do not yet know what they will lead to,—that our knowledge of them is in its infancy,—that from what we do know and see, we should not be surprised at any results, however wonderful,—that we discover in them that which in its fuller development and application will amaze the world; so in like manner may we speak of the divine life implanted in us by the Spirit of God."* We have it now in its infancy,—in its first stage and operation amidst the remains of sin in a fallen world, but we are looking forward to the morning of the resurrection when we shall be clothed upon with a glorified body,—better fitted to the life that is in us,—not hindering but increasing our spiritual joy, and enabling us to put forth our matured capacities of bliss in our Father's kingdom.

And now, brethren, if we are looking for the state of happiness thus described, ought we not to give some intimations of it in our conduct, and in the general turn of our thoughts? It is certain that in proportion to our belief in such an inheritance will be our sense of its value; our affections

* Bishop Armstrong.

and desires will be continually raised towards it, and though our bodies must be here, our hearts will be there. Let us pray for the grace and guidance of God's Holy Spirit, that our convictions of the importance of these things may really influence our conduct day by day, so that we may live as pilgrims and sojourners who are passing onward to their eternal home. The prize of our high calling is future and out of sight; and the promises of the Gospel will have no influence upon us if they are not made the subjects of daily meditation. We must learn to live here as people who belong to another world, for the apostle defines true faith to be "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" that is to say,—it gives us so clear a conviction of their existence as though they were full in view, and near at hand. It is the presence of this religious principle which makes us really in earnest about our soul's salvation, — which spiritualizes the thoughts and affections, and enables us to look forward to our last solemn change with serenity and joy.

Alas! how many are there who entirely disregard "the great and precious promises" with which the Word of God abounds. They know nothing of the Christian warfare; they stand aloof, as it were, from the conflict, regardless of the bliss and glory to which they may rise. A sad thought it is that an immortal soul, born for eternity,—more precious than all the world, should throw itself away upon *mere vanities,* the trifles of an hour, and thus become

an outcast from the heavenly inheritance. May God grant that none of us may come short of the happiness to which we are now invited! If we shake off the hindrances to our salvation, of which we may be painfully conscious; if, in dependence on His promised aid, we boldly go forth against our enemies, we shall, at last, be made more than conquerors, and be able to say with the great apostle, —"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

SERMON III.

St. Matthew xix. 21—24.

"JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, IF THOU WILT BE PERFECT, GO AND SELL THAT THOU HAST, AND GIVE TO THE POOR, AND THOU SHALT HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN; AND COME AND FOLLOW ME. BUT WHEN THE YOUNG MAN HEARD THAT SAYING, HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL: FOR HE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS. THEN SAID JESUS UNTO HIS DISCIPLES, VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT A RICH MAN SHALL HARDLY ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

It has often been said that no man is known till he is tried. The solemn declaration of the apostle Peter, that he would never deny Christ, might have gained for him the reputation of great courage if he had not been left to prove, by actual experience, the weakness and inefficacy of his resolutions. The man who expressed a desire to follow *our Lord* whithersoever He might go, began to *waver as soon* as he was informed that Jesus had

not a place where to lay His head. And the young ruler,* mentioned in the verses which I have just read, might have passed for an excellent character had he not been brought to the test, and suffered to shew the real dispositions of his heart. St. Mark tells us that he came running and kneeling to our Saviour, as if in haste, and resolved to become one of His followers. Though possessed of great wealth, and occupying an important position, yet, unlike the generality of persons in high life, he had seriously applied his mind to religion, with an earnest desire, as it should seem, to be guided aright. The case was hopeful, and from such a view we might have been ready to conclude that he was a real convert; but a little experience will teach us not to rely with confidence on any favourable appearances. Our Lord, who knew the bent of his mind, dealt with him in such a way as to shew his true character. He enquired, therefore, why he had given Him the title of good, since in its highest acceptation, it belonged only to God? He did not by this give up the title as if He had no right to it, or as if He did not possess the attributes of God. He did not say, "thou art wrong in calling Me good," but "why callest thou Me good?" His design was to examine on what ground the amiable youth had so addressed Him, and whether he had done it on a full conviction of His dignity as the Son of God. The ruler was filled with a conceit of his own good-

* "And a certain *ruler* asked him, saying, Good Master, *what shall I do to* inherit eternal life?"—St. Luke xviii. 18.

ness, and his ability to do everything that might be required of him; on which account, to expose his erroneous notions, and point out his deficiencies, our Lord referred him to the law, assuring him that he must keep the commandments in order to attain eternal life. The time was not yet arrived for the full disclosure of the Gospel. It was at present but sparingly revealed, and the most advanced of the disciples were not prepared to receive it. When any persons place reliance on their morality, and freedom from vice, they should be reminded of the full extent of their duty. Let them compare their best performances with the appointed rule. Let them try what their most vigorous exertions can effect; let them keep the commandments, but let one precept as well as another be observed, and that in its utmost extent, so as to regulate their inward thoughts and affections, no less than their outward practice. Such an uniform obedience is required from us at all times, and in all circumstances, without weariness or interruption to the end of life.* Upon the least offence we are rendered incapable of being justified by the works of the law; and though we may be decent and orderly in our conduct, we can obtain forgiveness for past offences no otherwise than by faith in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this young person, not knowing himself, and the defects of his obedience, presumptuously boasted that he had, from his earliest years, performed every duty enjoined in the

* Rev. T. Robinson.

law, and then asked whether anything further could be demanded of him? He was obstinately determined to lay claim to eternal life on the ground of his own obedience. Against this fatal error our Lord's command was specially directed; and as he resisted conviction in one way, he must be tried in another, and be put to a severer test. "Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be *perfect*, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." It must be confessed that a command so rigid was most difficult to be obeyed. If we consider his youth, his rank and opulence, or the habits in which he had been brought up, the act of self-denial proposed to him must have seemed truly appalling. To exchange wealth for poverty, and ease for trouble, was hard indeed for flesh and blood; and yet he might have been reminded that a more costly sacrifice was actually made by the great lawgiver of his own nation. Moses willingly gave up the luxuries of a court, and the honours of a kingdom, and "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." "If thou wilt be PERFECT, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." The word "perfect" has a special meaning here, and it is necessary to observe it in order to perceive the drift and full significance of our Lord's command. In *his own opinion* this young man was already

perfect; and, therefore, it became necessary to convince him of his error, and to humble his pride and self-sufficiency. The strictness of the precept was intended to produce this effect, but it only excited feelings of disappointment and sorrow. The terms to which he was required to submit were too stringent; his wealth was his idol, and of more value in his eyes than any treasure in heaven; and, therefore, he turned his back upon the Saviour of the world. As the blessing offered to him was future, and out of sight, he gave the preference to his earthly possessions, though he knew that one day he would have to part with them all, and that for ever.

When Abraham was required to offer up his only son in sacrifice, he did not hesitate for a moment to obey the divine command; but as he proceeded to perform the painful duty, God interposed, and assured him that as He had now no doubt of his sincerity and faithfulness, his son would be restored to him with tenfold blessings. Had the young ruler readily consented to give up all his possessions rather than lose the hope of heaven, it is not improbable that our Lord would have sent him away with an assurance that as he had given so convincing a proof of his love and obedience, the riches which, in thought and intention, he had resigned, would not be actually required; and the eternal life which he was anxious to obtain, would yet be secured to him.

One important lesson which we learn from the *narrative is,* that we cannot be the real disciples of

Christ unless our hearts are fully under His dominion. Were we to represent the religion of the Gospel as requiring no sacrifice, calling for no self-denial, involving no crosses, the representation would be untrue. It has, indeed, in the way of compensation, joys to impart which the world cannot give. In this view "religion never was designed to make our pleasures less;" but its joys are not the joys of sense, and they cannot be experienced except in the path of self-denial. Yet, far be it from any of us to suppose that our blessed Lord is a hard Master, who makes our way to heaven painful and laborious on purpose, never permitting us to have any enjoyment in the world. If such thoughts enter our minds, the reason is that we are ignorant of our true happiness, and we call that joy and pleasure which is, in reality, our torment and ruin; just as a child that is playing with a knife, weeps and resists in its ignorance, when the parent, out of love, commands it to put the knife away.* Christ would have our whole hearts that He may make us partakers of His perfect and eternal joy; and in order to accomplish this object, He calls upon us to sacrifice whatever would hinder His merciful designs towards us.

From the case of the young ruler our Lord took occasion to warn His disciples against the danger of riches. We might suppose that the warning was unnecessary, as they were all poor men, and

* Terstegen.

had no prospect of improving their condition by the acquisition of wealth. Can we suppose that they who labour for their daily bread, and with some difficulty obtain a livelihood, are in danger from the love of riches? Yes, all are in danger from this quarter. Our blessed Lord, who never looked upon the surface of things, but always into the very depths of the human heart, saw that the love of earth in preference to heaven is naturally the great ruling passion of our minds; that this is the chief thing which needs correction in us all, and that, therefore, the poor require to be as much reminded of it as the rich. Greediness, covetousness, and earthly desires, are not peculiar to one class of men, but the common and the besetting sin of all; and as in speaking to His disciples He spoke to us, and not to this or that person among us, but to each and all of us, so let us be assured that in hearing or reading this passage of Scripture, a special warning is intended for each of us. On one occasion He said to His apostles, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." There is reason to fear that there is no sin more common than an idolatrous love of riches. It is true no man is required to cast away his riches, or all the fruits of his labour, but he is absolutely forbidden to find delight in treasuring up his wealth, or in looking at it as his only source of happiness. My brethren, we live in a world of temptations, and we are in constant danger of imbibing the principles of the world, and yet few men seem to be sensible *of their danger*. When our Lord says, "it is easier

for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," how little are His words thought of or believed! "Of all who hear them, is there one person in a hundred who has any firm conviction left upon his mind that it is a great spiritual disadvantage to be rich; and that any person who has a good deal of this world's possessions, must be very earnest, and very serious indeed, very pains-taking, and self-denying; in fact, that he must do much more than others do, in order to be saved at all? Our Lord plainly teaches us that so great are the temptations and difficulties by which rich men are surrounded, that if they *are* saved it must be by a marvellous operation of God's grace enabling them to overcome the impediments and hindrances which lie in their way. But how few really believe this! Suppose any person among us, occupying a humble station in life, or even a station of independence, were to be informed on waking some morning that a fortune had been left him of many thousand pounds a year. Would it ever enter into that person's mind that such an event was of a very solemn and serious character, that it might prove a very great misfortune to him; that, in truth, it might be a punishment and not a blessing; and that, at all events, it had placed him in a situation not only of immense responsibility, but of actual danger, and that his salvation would now be a thousand times more difficult than before? I am sure no man who knows the world, no man who knows his *own* heart, would ever think that such

would be his feelings, on first receiving the news; and so little is the force of the truths of the Gospel understood that, perhaps, there are none of us who are sure that they would feel rightly on such an occasion. The intoxication of worldly grandeur would prove too strong for the words of Christ to find entrance into the mind, and each person would flatter himself that if there were any danger, he should now be able to do so much good with the money as to escape the danger."* Yet if there was any period in the world's history when it was peculiarly necessary to consider the warnings given us in Scripture against the love of earthly treasures, it is the present time. The love of money was always the root of all evil, but it is more so now than ever, as the commercial transactions of our own country, during the last twenty or thirty years, sufficiently prove. Mammon is the god which multitudes worship, as much almost as if they actually bowed the knee to his image. There are not many who can set a limit to their desire of earthly blessings; and yet it is certain that true happiness only begins when our wishes are kept under control; for he who impatiently hankers after more, enjoys nothing.

The disciples, on being told "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," exclaimed with amazement, "Who then can be saved?" They knew that all men love riches, and

* Bishop Medley. Note D.

that all would rather be rich than poor. Their divine Master's words filled them with perplexity and alarm, and not without reason. They were at a loss to understand how any man could overcome the love of the world, and the desire of riches. In His answer to the question, they were assured that all things are possible with God. With such a declaration deeply impressed upon our minds, we shall not be perplexed or intimidated by any difficulties we may meet with in our course. If we were left to ourselves, every act of self-denial would be irksome, and no degree of Christian holiness would be attainable by us. But we are not left to ourselves. The Spirit of God, with all His mighty energy, is ever at hand to minister strength to those who, from a conviction of their own exceeding weakness, earnestly seek His aid and heavenly grace.

We learn from many passages in the New Testament, as well as from the narrative now under our consideration, that He who made us and redeemed us for Himself will not be satisfied with a divided heart. But if we are indeed faithful and decided in His service, we shall have a perpetual feast in our consciences, and a capacity of enjoying every earthly blessing with the divinest relish. Let us pray for a more distinct and experimental knowledge of the love of Christ in our redemption; we shall then look with comparative indifference on all that the world has to offer to us. The kingdom of heaven is described as "a treasure *hid in a field, the* which when a man hath found,

he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." The young ruler was not in possession of this treasure, and the path of self-denial in which he would have found it appeared too narrow and too steep. O that God may enable us really to believe the glad tidings which are proclaimed to us; then shall we shake off the chains and fetters which bind us down to earth, and "the things which are unseen and eternal" will be daily in our thoughts as the only objects worthy of our supreme attention.

SERMON IV.

Philippians iv. 13.

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME."

THE ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome said a great many excellent things about virtue, and the pleasures of a virtuous life, but they could not tell their disciples how to overcome their natural disinclination to such a life; they could not point out any effectual means by which their own rules and precepts could be brought into practice. We, my brethren, are in possession of the secret; for the Gospel meets this very difficulty. It tells us that, though weak and helpless in ourselves, we may yet walk, and even run in the way of God's commandments. When a man first begins, in a serious mood, to read the Holy Scriptures; when he finds that he is daily required to lead a godly, righteous, and sober life;—to part with everything which is *offensive to God,* though dear as a right eye, or

serviceable as a right hand, he is ready to exclaim, "if all this be necessary, who can entertain any hope of being saved?" The disciples of our Lord uttered that cry on being told that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. But great and many as the things required of us may seem, they are not too many or too great for the weakest among us, if we enter on the task in the right spirit, and avail ourselves of the resources which the grace of God has provided for us, for then it is that the soul is carried forward by a force which is not its own; it is "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Such is the doctrine set forth by the apostle in the words which I have now read. When he says that he could do all things in the strength of Christ, he means that he could patiently endure his trials, and proceed joyfully in his course of obedience through the Spirit of Christ which is communicated, in measure, to all the regenerated members of His mystical body, the Church. If there be anything real in the baptism of the Holy Ghost; if the sacred gift is indeed vouchsafed to us according to His faithful promise, then have we power which others have not, of walking in God's commandments, and "serving him truly all the days of our life." It is of great importance, my brethren, that we should have a clear understanding of the work of Christ in our hearts by His Spirit, as well as of His atoning work in dying for our sins on the cross. *By His death* we are reconciled to God, and obtain

the full forgiveness of our sins, and by the energy of His Spirit our corrupted nature is "renewed in righteousness, and true holiness." The one blessing without the other would have been incomplete. Forgiveness without a new nature would have left us unfit for the blissful employments of the heavenly world; and a new nature without forgiveness would still have left us under the power of divine justice, and exposed to eternal misery. But thanks be to God, the Gospel proclaims to us not only a free pardon for our sins, but grace to renew and sanctify our souls, and strength sufficient for us in every time of need; so that if we faithfully use the blessings which He is ready to bestow, we shall go on victoriously in our course until, at length, we are put in possession of righteousness unsullied by any stain of sin, peace unbroken by any sense of guilt, and joy unalloyed by any fear of its coming to an end.

We may, perhaps, more clearly understand the apostle's words in the text if we read, in connection with it, our Lord's Parable of the Vine and Branches, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. "Without me," says He, "ye can do nothing. I am the vine, ye are the branches. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." The whole design of this parable is to teach us that the existence and maintenance of spiritual life in our souls depends altogether on the grace which we receive *from Christ.* The branch depends on the stem of

the tree, not only for support, but for life; cut it off, and it dies. It has no principle of vitality in itself, no self-supporting—self-animating power. Exactly so is it with us, my brethren. Our spiritual life is derived entirely from our risen and ascended Redeemer, who now "sitteth at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father." No doctrine of Christianity is more clearly or fully revealed than this. St. Paul, in another Epistle, uses the following remarkable words: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) The apostle possessed a life which was distinct from his natural life; and, as the effect of this divine endowment, he could perform what he had no will or power to perform before he received it. And these words are not to be confined to St. Paul. Christ, by His Spirit, liveth in all believers. He is not only "the Lord our righteousness," but also "the Lord our strength:" otherwise we might indeed despair of ever performing what is required of us. Observe, for instance, the duties to which we are exhorted in one of the verses preceding my text: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." This is the standard of holiness which is set before us in the New Testament. *These are* the virtues which we are commanded to *cherish,* and to practise. But who is sufficient for

the task? Who can obey the precept in its full extent without supernatural assistance? It is not enough to have correct views of the sublime morality of the Gospel; we want to know by what means that morality becomes attainable. If left to ourselves our best resolutions would prove weak and ineffectual,—but "all things are possible to him that believeth,"—to him whose faith unites him to the omnipotence of Christ. When the heavenly gift is received, we pursue with delight the path of obedience; lessons once hard to learn no longer appear difficult, or if difficulties arise, we are enabled to overcome them, being well assured that we too may do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us. And here let me observe, that in setting before you the Scriptural standard of holiness, the ministers of Christ are far too sensible of their own imperfections to think, for a moment, that the required excellences may all be found in themselves; but they may be allowed to admire and to recommend what, perhaps, they have not yet attained in their own persons, and even to give rules to others which may not be fully exemplified in their own conduct. When speaking to you in the name of their heavenly Master, it is clearly their duty to place before you the doctrines and precepts of His Word, without any attempt to evade their force, or to explain away their obvious sense. O brethren! let us not rest without satisfactory evidence that we are vitally and spiritually united to our Lord Jesus Christ. This, and *this only, is true* religion. Let us not be satisfied

with the semblance, the mere appearance of the thing, but seek after the reality. At our baptism we were grafted into Him as the true Vine: we were placed under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and we ought to be deriving constant nourishment from the tree on which we were grafted;—but all communication is cut off between Christ and those who do not obey Him. A branch may go through all the form and ceremony of being grafted into a tree; it may be outwardly fastened and tied to it; it may appear to the eye to be made a part of the tree; but unless the inward process and operation take place also; unless there be a vital communication from the original stock to the new graft, a real union never ensues. Notwithstanding all the fair and promising appearances, the branch is really no part of the tree; and far from bearing any fruit, it will, in a short time, wither and decay, and discover its true state. So will it be with us if we are not vitally united to Christ. It is evident, then, that the great practical question for our consideration is this: Do we find a divine and heavenly principle exerting itself within us, and bringing our will into subjection to the will of God? As an evidence of His presence with us, do we find that sin when it shews itself in any form is at once met and opposed, and that by degrees its power becomes weaker and weaker, and the influence of divine grace stronger and stronger? If so, then we may, without presumption, venture to say, in the language of our Communion Service, *that* "we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; that

we are one with Christ, and Christ with us." What remains is that we should daily go forward in the narrow path of holiness. The warfare is not ended; the crown is not yet won. We must be faithful,—not only for a day, for a month, or a year, but unto death, or we shall come short of the promised bliss. We know, indeed, that entire freedom from sin, from all conflict between the flesh and Spirit, does not belong to our state on earth; yet we are to be constantly aiming at it, and approaching nearer and nearer to it, though in its fulness and perfection it belongs only to the heavenly world. It is a great mistake to suppose that the standard of holiness is raised much higher in the Gospel than it is necessary for the generality of Christians ever to think of reaching. Many, through this delusion, are satisfied with a state of heart and life far short of that which the Word of God requires. If we think of gaining heaven with the least amount of labour and self-denial, we prove, by this niggardly and unwilling subjection to the law of Christ, that we do not unreservedly obey Him as our King. Our loyalty is divided, and therefore insincere. Let us ever bear in mind that the necessity of divine influence gives no encouragement to the notion that little or nothing is to be done on our part. The grace of God is always connected with human effort; and though it is He "who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure," yet in the very passage where this declaration occurs, we are commanded to "work *out our own* salvation with fear and trembling."

It is true, indeed, that Christ alone is the foundation of our peace, "for other foundation can no man lay;" and under the consciousness of our manifold failings, imperfections, and sins, we must still plead His all-sufficient merits as our only ground of hope. Yet the sincerity of our faith in Him as our Redeemer, must be proved by our earnest desires after holiness, and by renewed efforts to follow His example from day to day.* In the third chapter of this Epistle, St. Paul himself shews that doctrine and practice are closely connected together. He declares that he esteemed all things but dross, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord," and that his desire was to be "found in him, not having his own righteousness." Did his reliance on the Saviour's merits encourage him to be slothful or negligent in his course? Just the reverse. "Brethren," says he, "this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Though he was the most eminent of the apostles, and though he knew that nothing could separate him from the love of his God and Saviour, he was as earnest, and diligent, and watchful, as if all depended on his own exertions. "Men act thus continually in matters pertaining to the present life; in the cultivation of their land, for instance. They clear and prepare their ground.

* Note E.

They sow their seed, and go through all the toils of husbandry with unremitted diligence; and when they can do no more, they watch for the increase; they think of it; they talk of it with the deepest interest; and yet they cannot make a single blade of corn to spring up from the ground. The sun must shine upon it,—the rain and the dews must nourish it, or it will never shew any sign of life. They can command none of these things. God must work with them, and for them, from first to last. Do they, on this account, desist from their toil, and say, 'It is all of God; what can I do? or what need I do?' Far otherwise. They know that He has connected His blessing with their labour, and on no other terms can they hope to reap a plentiful harvest. And so it is in religion. Our feeble endeavours are not to be dispensed with, though His divine energy and influence can alone give them effect. We know that true faith and repentance are the gifts of God, and that we have no power to renew our souls "in holiness after his image;" but we *have* power to use the means of grace with persevering diligence. We can all think of the solemn judgment day which is approaching; we can search the Scriptures, and spend a portion of each day in serious meditation; we can pray for heavenly wisdom, and the grace of God's Holy Spirit, in the name of our blessed Redeemer. We can receive the memorials of His dying love at His holy table, in obedience to His own command. These actions we *can* perform, and *to these actions* the blessing is promised. The

apostle declares, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, that the strength of Christ was made perfect in his weakness. The same aid, the same supernatural influence is ready to be extended to us. Our resources, therefore, are far more than adequate to our necessities; and, again and again, we are assured that God will give His Holy Spirit to all who ask. It is not said that the sacred gift will be bestowed on the worthy, or the upright, or the good; there is no such limit; and, indeed, such a limit would greatly discourage many a penitent sinner. The promise being made indefinitely, without any restriction or exception whatever, it is open to all sorts and conditions of men. Here is inducement for the most unworthy to return, like the prodigal, to their Father's house, and ask for the inestimable blessing.

Lastly, we may learn from this subject, that our best safeguard against infidelity is a personal experience of the joy and happiness which our holy religion never fails to impart to all who receive it with undoubting faith. In the language of poetry that happiness may be described as "the sunshine of the breast,"—"a sober certainty of bliss." An "earnest" of their future inheritance is imparted to all true believers. Now, an earnest is a part of the whole thing promised. It is of the same kind as that which is hereafter to be fully enjoyed. The Spirit of Christ is "the earnest" which His faithful followers receive. He not only gives them an assurance that eternal happiness awaits them in *a better world,* but He affords them even now a

foretaste of it. The heaven they look forward to may be said to be already begun in their hearts. Their joy is, indeed, "a joy unspeakable," "a peace which passeth all understanding," and thousands in every age of the Church have borne testimony to its reality. To such feelings the infidel is a total stranger; and, therefore, he is as incompetent to form a correct notion of the Christian religion, as a blind man would be to judge of colours, or a deaf man to discourse of musical sounds. When we have once felt and proved that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation," nothing will afterwards induce us to forsake Christ. We shall then be prepared to "give a reason of the hope that is in us," and our faith will remain unshaken amidst all the changes and distractions of this fallen world.

SERMON V.

Hebrews iv. 16.

"LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE, THAT WE MAY OBTAIN MERCY, AND FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED."

THE privileges of true believers in Christ may well excite our wonder. The King of kings and Lord of lords not only sends His angels to be ministering spirits to those who are heirs of salvation, but He condescends to hold fellowship with them Himself, and invites them to come boldly to His throne of grace that He may bestow upon them, in answer to their prayers, whatever blessings they may need. Impressed with love and gratitude to Him as their God and Father, they delight in His presence. They walk with Him daily, after the example of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, encompassed with His favour as with a shield, supported by His gracious promises, and cheered by the light of His *countenance*. This is the happiness which we may

all enjoy; but we are naturally afraid of God. We regard Him only as our Judge. A slavish fear is always the effect of sin; and, therefore, when our first parents had transgressed the divine command, they went and hid themselves among the trees of the garden. Now it is the design of the Gospel to remove all feelings of slavish dread, and to give us confidence towards God. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," says the apostle, "but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Through faith in the meritorious righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ we are fully pardoned and accepted, and we may approach Him with confidence, as if we had never sinned at all. There is, in consequence of His mediation, a new way opened to our heavenly Father's throne; for He has satisfied every demand of divine justice in our stead; He has magnified the law, and made it honourable by His own obedience unto death; He has made a perfect atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And having ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, He is now seated in the heavenly places as the Head of His Church; and because He ever liveth to make intercession for us, He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. When we consider what we are in ourselves, and what we ought to be, we may well be filled with anxiety and fear; but it is our consolation to know that He who has undertaken our redemption is "God manifest in the flesh;" one with us, and *one with the* Father. On this truth we may

confidently rest the whole weight of our hope. Our cause is in safe hands; the atonement is complete, and "the suretyship is sure." You will observe that the word "therefore" in the text is connected with the verses immediately preceding. "Seeing," says the apostle, "that we have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens" (to intercede for us), let us "therefore" come boldly into the presence of our God. There is a way for each, and a welcome for all. Some commentators translate the passage thus:—"Let us come with freedom of speech* to the throne of grace." As if the apostle had said, "Let us come and declare freely all our wants, all our wishes, and all our cares. Christ, our great Advocate with the Father, has obtained liberty for sinners to speak freely all their mind." And this, doubtless, is a great truth, and a blessed privilege. It is evident, however, that the apostle includes not only liberty of speech, but boldness, or holy confidence of mind, in our approach or access to God by Christ. This may be clearly inferred from his own words in another place. "In whom," says he, "we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him:" (Eph. iii. 12) and in the tenth chapter of this epistle he says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." The boldness with which we

* μετὰ παῤῥησίας.

are invited to come to the throne of grace forms a striking contrast between the Jewish and the Christian dispensation, not only as it regards the priesthood and the sacrifices, but in the mind and feelings of the worshippers. The people of Israel had no liberty of access to their God into "the Holy of Holies" but through the medium of the high priest; nor was he permitted to approach the divine presence there more than once a year, and then with the greatest attention to the ceremonial observances. When he went into the most holy place to sprinkle the blood of atonement on the mercy-seat, he was previously to take a censer of burning incense that the cloud of it might conceal the divine glory from his sight. And this was required on pain of death. How different is the holy liberty obtained for us through the merits and intercession of our blessed Redeemer! All may now come, priest and people, yea, they may come boldly to the throne itself with the assurance of being mercifully accepted. The throne of terror is changed into a throne of love, and the grace of God flows freely, and immeasurably, to all who come to Him in the name of His Son. If our prayers are offered up in humble dependence on His sacrifice and intercession, they shall assuredly prevail. God may not, indeed, answer them immediately, and it may be that He may not grant the precise thing which we pray for, but He will answer us in the best time, and in the best manner, granting that which in the end will be most conducive *to His* own glory, and our good.* When

* Note F.

we ask for any temporal blessing, and do not obtain it, let us always believe either that we do not ask as we ought, or that it is good for us not to receive it. We must consider refusals from God as gifts designed for our good, because it is far better that we should not receive what He foresees would be injurious to us instead of being a blessing. With this limitation, it is wonderful to think of the extent of the promises which He gives to encourage us in prayer. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." He even anticipates our wants, and shews that He is more willing to give than we are to ask. "Before they call," says He, "I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." And to raise our ideas of His condescension and grace still higher, He speaks thus: "Put me in remembrance, let us plead together; ask of me things to come; concerning the works of my hands command ye me." And there are examples on record to shew that such expressions are not mere figures of speech, but words full of deep and important meaning. When the Lord appeared in the form of an angel to Jacob, the patriarch continued in prayer throughout the night, nor would he allow the celestial stranger to depart till he had obtained an answer to his petitions. "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Of Moses it is said that he conversed with God face to face, even as a man talketh with his friend, and when he interceded for the people of Israel who *had been guilty* of rebellion and idolatry, "Let me

alone," said God, as if He could not proceed to punish His enemies without the consent of His own servant. These and other examples which might be mentioned give peculiar force to the words of my text,—"Let us come boldly to the throne of grace."

Having considered the grounds on which we may approach God with confidence, I shall now proceed to notice the two-fold blessings which we are here particularly directed to pray for—mercy and grace.

The Gospel proclaims free forgiveness to all who repent and believe, and the terms in which our pardon is at first conveyed and made sure to us are these: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Such is the acquittal which the penitent sinner receives on his first return to God. But we are commanded to pray for daily forgiveness as for our daily bread; "for there is not a just man (a perfectly just man), upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;" and "if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves." Every day we fall short of what is required of us. Every day there are defects in our obedience; something wrong in our motives, in our thoughts, words, or actions, so that if God should be strict to mark what is done amiss, we could not stand in His sight. Every day, therefore, we have need of pardon for our manifold offences and imperfections; and the true Christian should bear in mind that he does not stand upon the same terms as Adam did in a state of innocence, *to whom the least* failure was fatal. God proclaims

Himself to us as "gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." And "like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." If He requires us to forgive an offending brother, though he should trespass against us seventy times seven, we may rest assured that no limits can be set to His own compassion and loving-kindness. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts." It cannot be denied that man, in his perversity, is prone to convert the bread of life into poison, and to draw encouragement to sin from God's readiness to forgive. Such men there were in the days of the apostles—"men of corrupt minds, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness." But the apostles did not, on that account, conceal the grace of God, neither should we. We are not to keep back doctrines which may yield spiritual nourishment to the children of God, because those doctrines may be abused by hypocrites and self-deceivers. Nothing tends to excite a greater abhorrence of all sin in the mind of a true believer than just views of the love and mercy of God. Instead of continuing in sin that grace may abound, he will be ready to say with Ezra of old, "seeing that thou our God hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments?" Thus, brethren, you perceive that though we are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain *mercy*, we should remember that the forgiveness *which, in this* text, we are especially directed to seek,

is for the sins of infirmity to which even the best Christians are subject. No man who obstinately continues in a course of wilful, presumptuous sin, can derive any encouragement from this passage of Scripture.

We learn, further, that we all stand in need of continual supplies of grace whereby we may be enabled to overcome the world, to mortify the deeds of the body, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. In our own strength we are utterly unequal to this great work. If an ample provision had not been made for us in this respect, our evil nature could never have been renewed or made holy, and, therefore, our salvation would have been impossible. But, blessed be God, such a provision has been made for us. In Christ there dwells a fulness of sanctifying grace, if we only seek it in the use of the means which He has appointed. From our glorified Redeemer who has "ascended up on high, and received gifts for the rebellious,"—the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, we may obtain grace for every emergency, grace to help in every time of need. Are we tempted, and assaulted by our spiritual enemies? In Him there is grace to strengthen us that we may resist and conquer. Are we sorely afflicted in mind, body, or estate? In Him there is grace to support, and comfort us, and to make us patient, and resigned. Do we grow dull and languid in our religious course? In Him there is grace sufficient to fill the soul anew with light, and warmth, *and vital energy*. Are we ever in danger from the

love of the world? His grace can raise our affections to things above, and enable us to live as strangers and pilgrims on earth. In short, whatever may be our spiritual necessities, whatever we may need for our advancement in holiness, there is sufficient and suitable grace provided for us through the inexhaustible bounty of our God. Such, then, is the nature of the blessings which we are here directed to seek—mercy to pardon our imperfections and sins; and grace to renew our souls, to sustain us amidst our trials, and to make us victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And now, my brethren, it surely becomes us all to admire with adoring gratitude the condescension of our heavenly Father in permitting us to approach Him with so much confidence, and without any restriction as to time or place. Had He permitted us once in our whole lives to come into His presence, and to make known our wants to Him, it would have been a great and unspeakable privilege. Justly, then, may we be filled with astonishment when He invites and commands us to avail ourselves of this privilege as often as our necessities may urge us to do so. Yet it is to be feared that many do not avail themselves of the privilege. They rise to their daily occupations, and forget to kneel in supplication before God, for guidance in the path of duty; or if they kneel before Him, it is in so careless and hurried a manner that they derive no spiritual benefit. They go through their usual business with a sole eye to worldly considerations, and then retire to rest at night with their

thoughts still lingering on the transactions of the day, and with no inclination to engage in serious prayer. The unchangeable law of Christ's kingdom is this: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find." It follows that all who neglect this important duty must be destitute of the grace and favour of God. There can be no question on this point in the mind of any one who believes the Scriptures. He who lives without secret prayer lives without God; and we may, therefore, safely conclude that the neglect of it is the cause why so many, even in the visible Church of Christ, do not profit by the ordinances of God's house, or experience the spiritual blessings promised in the Gospel. However sincere we may be in our regard for religion, yet we are not to relax for a single day in the discharge of this great Christian duty. "The very best and holiest men have always been distinguished for their devotional character, and it is a sure sign of an approaching decline in religion when our prayers begin to be less frequent, and less earnest. Relaxation may be necessary in all urgent and laborious worldly business in which men are engaged, but the care of the soul admits of no intermission, because with the soul's adversaries no truce can be made. It will not do to be earnest for a time, and then give over as if we had carried our point; this is doing nothing to the purpose. We are expressly commanded to continue instant in prayer, and to watch in the same with all perseverance."* If any among us know but

* Dean Milner.

little of the peace and spiritual joy which are experienced by others, may not the secret reason be found here,—they have not sought these blessings with the earnestness and perseverance which they deserve, and which God requires. Though, at times, some of us may be able to say with David, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God," yet we are ever prone to fall back into a state of coldness and formality. Indeed, there is nothing more difficult than to maintain a devotional spirit, and to cultivate daily communion with God. What real Christian is there who does not find the wanderings of the imagination in prayer a continual cause of distress. He retires, it may be, with the Bible in his hand, resolving to be alone with his God, and Saviour, but the world follows him into his retirement. Some vanity, some trifling object arrests his attention, and dissipates his thoughts; or if, for a short time, his petitions seem to be earnest and fervent, yet his liveliest devotions are often followed by a listlessness during which his thoughts wander to the ends of the earth. While we are humbled under a sense of these our failings and imperfections, let us not despondingly yield to discouragement. It is possible that we may be greatly hindered in this duty by an apprehension that we are not heard; we must remember that we have an Advocate who pleads our cause in heaven, and if we are sincere, we shall be heard and accepted notwithstanding our unworthiness. At the same time we must take heed that there be nothing in *our conduct to* contradict our prayers, and to render

them unavailing. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," says David, that is, if I cherish iniquity in my heart, "the Lord will not hear me." I would say, then, brethren, let no actions be taken in hand but such as you can commend to God in prayer. Engage in no pursuit, in no employment, or undertaking which you would be ashamed to mention to Him, or on which you could not ask His blessing. Sincerity, and freedom from guile, are absolutely necessary to render our prayers acceptable; and without His blessing, whatever your pursuits, or business, or occupations may be, you will find in the end that you have been spending money, as it were, "for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not." It is the prayer of the righteous man only that "availeth much;" and the marks and characteristics of a righteous man are—a tender conscience, an abhorrence of sin, and a fear of grieving God's Holy Spirit. May we be enabled so to ask as to receive, and in daily approaching the throne of grace to hold communion with God, may we find that our heaven is indeed begun on earth.

It is worthy of remark that in the account which is given of our Lord's transfiguration, it is said that "as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered;" as He prayed, "his raiment became white and glistering, and there appeared to him Moses and Elias in glory." So, my brethren, if we would be favoured with divine manifestations of God's love to our souls,—if we would obtain a *glimpse by faith* of the glory of heaven, we must

often retire from the world, and lift up the desires of our hearts to Him who seeth in secret. While we thus continue instant in prayer, "the beauty of holiness" will shine forth in us so as to be observed by others; and we shall converse, not indeed with Moses and Elias, or with angels, but "our fellowship will be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." And so our happiness will go on increasing until we reach that glorious world where the utmost desires of our souls shall be satisfied, and prayer shall give place to never-ending praise!

SERMON VI.

St. Matthew xxiv. 44.

"BE YE ALSO READY: FOR IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT THE SON OF MAN COMETH."

We learn from various passages of Scripture that the second coming of our Lord will be sudden and unexpected. It is a solemn thought that our Almighty Judge and His attendant angels may become objects of sight to us at any hour. We are warned that as the deluge overtook the inhabitants of the old world while they were eagerly engaged in the various pursuits of life, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. How important, then, is it, my brethren, that we should always be in a state of readiness lest the event should take any of us by surprise. When the angels appeared to the shepherds at the birth of our Lord, it was a sudden appearance. "Suddenly," we are told, "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." The night till then had seemed like any

other night. The shepherds were keeping watch over their flock; all around was quiet and peaceful, when, in a moment, a glorious light shone in the heavens, and the angels of God became visible. Thus sudden and unexpected will be the appearance of our Lord and Saviour "when he shall come in the glory of the Father, with all his holy angels with him." From being too much under the influence of earthly things, our hearts grow cold, and we do not readily consider how near may be the approach of our Lord's advent. We are generally disposed to place it at a remote distance, and this may be said to have been a cause of reproach to the Church of Christ for a long period. His enemies are ready to ask, "where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." This is the objection which infidels have ever been ready to repeat. Because things continue as they were, because they see no immediate sign of the end of the world, they conclude that the warnings given by our Lord and His apostles are unworthy of attention. The heavens are still bright and peaceful over our heads. The sun still rises and sets, and brings on summer and winter, and the appointed weeks of harvest, and the sign of the Son of Man is not seen in the clouds. But we should bear in mind the declaration of the apostle Peter, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Now if a thousand years in the sight of the Almighty *are but as* one day, then the time that has already

ıe by since the first coming of our Lord, is in-
nificant in comparison with that age which never
an end, which we call eternity, and into which,
good or for evil, our lot will assuredly be cast.
› tell the infidel that the prophecies which re-
›d to Christ's first coming were all exactly ful-
›d at the appointed time; and this gives us an
urance that His second coming is equally certain.
: four thousand years the ancient people of God
:e kept in anxious expectation of their Messiah's
›earance. The Jewish prophets for a succession
ages declared that a mighty Deliverer would
ıe, who should be Immanuel, or God with us;
Son of God, and the Son of Man, the seed of
raham and of David, poor and obscure, and yet
› whom David calls his Lord. It was predicted
t He should be born at Bethlehem, and that He
uld have a forerunner in the spirit of Elias,
ing in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of
Lord." It was declared that He should make
› appearance before the destruction of the Temple;
t He should enter into Jerusalem meek and
'ly, and riding upon an ass; that He should
:k mighty miracles, such as opening the eyes of
blind, and the ears of the deaf, and making
dumb to praise God, and the lame to leap as an
t. The prophets further declare that, notwith-
ıding all these displays of His power and good-
s, He should be rejected by the greater part of the
ion; that He should be despised and afflicted—
ıan of sorrows and acquainted with grief—that
should be accused by false witnesses—betrayed

by an intimate friend, and sold for thirty pieces of silver. It was predicted that He should be led like a lamb to the slaughter, not opening His mouth except to intercede for the transgressors; that His enemies should strip Him of His raiment, and cast lots upon it; that they should pierce His hands and His feet; that they should give Him gall and vinegar to drink; that He should be put to death, and laid in the sepulchre of a rich man; that He should rise again before He had seen corruption, and ascend into heaven, and sit at God's right hand, and be crowned with honour and glory; that He should prosper like a conqueror and justify many; that then Jerusalem should be made desolate, and the Jews dispersed into all lands; and that finally He should come to be the Judge of the quick and the dead. Now observe, all these prophecies except the last have been fulfilled to the letter. If, then, so many prophecies have been accomplished relating to His humiliation and sufferings, we may rest assured that those relating to His glorious and triumphant advent will be fulfilled also. What though eighteen hundred years have elapsed since our blessed Redeemer was taken up from us into heaven; is the probability of His return thereby lessened? Is it not rather greatly increased? For do not those eighteen hundred years unfold to us a connected chain of fulfilled prophecy? We are certain, from the testimony of God's Word, that the present state of things is sooner or later to come to an end by a series of mighty political *earthquakes*, or convulsions, which are to prepare

the way for the kingdom of Christ. We are certain, therefore, that every day brings that event nearer; and the present unsettled state of the nations seems to indicate that the time is fast approaching when the Prince of the kings of the earth shall take the management of affairs into His own hands, and establish a monarchy of love on the ruins of Satan's empire. The marvellous events and transactions of the last twenty or thirty years, so varied, so singular, may justly lead us to conclude that they are not merely the buds and blossoms, but the expanded and full-grown leaves of the fig-tree, announcing that summer is nigh at hand. "Seeing, then, that we look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness." And here I come to the practical instruction conveyed to us in the words of my text: "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." In what does this readiness consist? A more important enquiry cannot engage our attention. Too many endeavour to banish the subject entirely from their minds. The very notion of Christian watchfulness contradicts all their habits and feelings. Earthly cares or earthly pleasures engross their minds, and the Judgment is forgotten. It has been said that a little learning is a dangerous thing. For much the same reason, we may say that a little religion is a dangerous thing; and as a little knowledge may be worse even than ignorance, so may a little religion be worse even than *coldness and* indifference, because men are more

easy and self-satisfied under it, and the good opinion of the world lulls their consciences asleep. Many suffer themselves to be thus beguiled in spite of their better reason, forgetting that good wishes alone will never bring them to heaven. When God commands us to be watchful,—to strive, to wrestle and fight, we must exert ourselves in the way which He requires, or how can we expect to win the prize? "The day of the Lord," says St. Paul, "so cometh as a thief in the night, therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." Our blessed Lord Himself has not left us without many solemn warnings besides the one now under our consideration. And why did He so frequently urge the same caution? Because He knew what was in man. He knew how heedless,—how inconsiderate we are, and of ourselves disinclined to watchfulness; willing, if we might, to have our portion in this life at all hazards, and unwilling to consider our latter end. O, brethren, let it be our care not to neglect a charge so solemn, and so often repeated; for though He may not speedily come in the clouds of heaven, yet He may come to us by death sooner than we expect, and in that case the result will be all the same. What we are at death we shall be at the final judgment. Now, the really watchful and consistent Christian, I would describe as one who has been brought to repent sincerely of his sins,—to condemn himself on account of them, and yet, as a pardoned and justified sinner, to rejoice in hope of the glory of *God.* From a principle of conscience and a sense

of duty he is attentive to his worldly calling, and guides his affairs with discretion." But his heart is not unduly attached to earthly things. He has been made fully sensible of the infinite value of those unchanging and imperishable blessings which the Gospel sets before him, and, therefore, he cannot see things here in the same light as before. The mists of error are dispersed, and he now views objects in their real form and size. He is enabled by the power of faith to overcome the world, and is not much elated by the joys he meets with, nor too much cast down by the trials which may fall to his lot. As he is commanded to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, he is keenly alive to the dangers of his present condition. Though the heavenly inheritance is secured to him by the faithful promise of God, yet he knows that it must be through toil and self-denial he is to reach it. Amidst all his imperfections, the power of religion really gains ground in his heart, and shews its influence there by purifying his affections, improving his temper, and promoting his growth in grace. Yet he places no confidence in any of his own doings. His sure trust for salvation is in Christ, from whom he derives all his righteousness and strength. On His merits alone he relies for pardon and peace, and on the influences of His Holy Spirit for the renewal and sanctification of his soul. Thus, like a faithful soldier of the cross, he keeps his armour bright, and wears it in daily expectation of *his approaching* triumph. And though his Saviour

may appear to delay His coming, yet he slumbers not, but listens, as it were, in watchful silence, to every distant sound that may give notice of His approach. Such is the character, and such are the feelings and principles of the man who is waiting for the return of his Lord and Master. And the feelings and conduct which I have described may be maintained in whatever situation of life we may be placed. It is in our every day task and duty that we are to shew we are under the influence of religious principles, no matter however humble in itself that task may be. Be it labour in the field, or service in the house, be it labour of the body or of the mind, it comes to us by God's appointment, and in it we may serve Him as acceptably as in the highest office of power. Many imagine that they cannot be engaged in the common affairs of life, and be religious at the same time. This is a grievous mistake, as we may easily prove. In the verses immediately connected with my text we read that two persons shall be in the field following their lawful occupations at the very time when the Judge appears, "the one shall be taken and the other left," the one shall be taken to meet the Lord in the air; the other shall be left to perish among His enemies; each will be dealt with according to his true character. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left." It is possible, then, to be fully prepared to meet our blessed Lord at His coming, even while we are engaged about our worldly affairs. Great, *however, is* the danger of those whose thoughts are

entirely occupied about earthly things. If it be too plain that they give to their religious duties a forced and unwilling attention, and as little time as possible, while for the cares and pleasures of the world every nerve is strained, and the whole soul becomes quick and vigorous as an eagle, then, assuredly, they are not in a state of readiness to stand before the Lord at His coming. No, my brethren, till by God's grace we begin to learn the hard lesson of setting our affections on things above, not on things on the earth, the advent of the great King would bring no joy to us. Yet, let me observe that the state of readiness of which I have been speaking does not imply an overwhelming anxiety about the soul, but only a supreme concern for its interests. It is not a depression of mind that is required of us, not a continual apprehension of speedy or immediate dissolution, but such a thoughtful recollection on the awful subject of death and judgment as becomes those who are every moment liable to its approach, and whose everlasting destiny depends on the state in which it finds them.

May we be enabled to walk in the narrow path of holiness from day to day, and thus make it manifest that we are treading in the steps of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, confidently expecting that with them we shall rise to the life immortal, when our Lord comes "to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

SERMON VII.

2 Cor. v. 1.

"WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE WERE DISSOLVED, WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS."

In a time of dangerous illness many are terrified at the thought of dying. There is some uncertainty in the matter, and men do not like to venture their all upon an uncertainty. Under any circumstances it is, indeed, a solemn thing to die. There is something awful in the solitariness of dying. Our friends may accompany us, so to speak, to the brink of Jordan, but there they leave us. We must die alone. How vain at that hour is the help of man! Happy will it be for us, my brethren, if we are then able to express our faith and confidence in the words which I have chosen for my text. The apostle knew and was sure that death to him *would be* unspeakable gain. His hope of final

salvation was unclouded, and the glory of heaven seemed to break upon his view while as yet he was an inhabitant of earth. Now, this full assurance of faith may at first appear to be an attainment far beyond our reach; but if we steadily persevere in humble dependence on the grace of God, and in the diligent use of the means which He has mercifully provided for our spiritual improvement, there is Scriptural reason to hope that we may arrive at the same degree of Christian happiness.

Before I proceed to shew how the fear of death may be overcome, it will be proper to consider the representation which the apostle here gives of the frailty of our present condition. By the word tabernacle he means the bodies of flesh and blood in which our souls now dwell; for you will observe that he did not consider his body as himself any more than a man considers his house as himself. "Just what a tenant or lodger is to a house,—that the soul is to the body. And as a man does not die because he is obliged to leave his house, or because it has become ruinous, so the soul remains alive though the body may moulder into dust. Now the apostle compares the body of man not merely to a house which may last a great many years, but to a tabernacle, a building slenderly constructed, and not intended to continue long. It is like a tent which is put up for a temporary purpose, and may be taken down again in a few hours." Is not this a very striking picture of the uncertainty and shortness of human life, and the *frailty of our mortal* bodies? We live in them as

people live in tents, soon to be taken down, and never intended to be their permanent abode. Truly, then, we have all reason to pray with the Psalmist, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am,"—that I may know, to good purpose, how frail I am. That life is short and uncertain every one will readily allow. As a matter of fact, this truth is so familiar to us that the most thoughtless will often acknowledge it by a passing remark; but as a truth that should rest upon our minds as well as hang upon our lips, it has not yet, perhaps, had its full force upon any of us. "O, that they were wise," says God, "that they would *consider* their latter end!" The youngest among us are deeply concerned in this subject. Many are weak and sickly from their early childhood, and die after they have lived only a few years. The tent may be of very slender construction, and may speedily fall to the ground. But it often happens that the young are taken away in their full health and vigour; so that none are exempted from the common lot. All, therefore, are called upon to *consider* their latter end. And the true Christian need not shrink from the contemplation of his last great change, since death puts him in secure possession of those blessings to which in prospect he had long looked forward. It turns his faith into vision, his hopes into enjoyment. At the dissolution of his earthly tabernacle, his soul passes into a state of un*speakable* happiness; and though his bliss will not

be complete till the morning of the resurrection, he takes his place at once among the angels of God, clothed, it may be, in an ethereal form similar to theirs.* The apostle's language seems to imply that such was his own view of the glorious change which awaited himself and his fellow labourers at the end of their course. It was the same assurance that rendered the apostle Peter equally composed in the near approach of crucifixion. He speaks of that cruel death merely as the putting off of his tabernacle, to which he was reconciled by the thought that endless bliss awaited him at his departure hence. And this joyful assurance is not to be confined to the apostles. It is the privilege of all the faithful servants of God. Yet, alas! my brethren, how far do our feelings fall short of this triumphant hope! Of the greater number even of sincere Christians, in these days, it may be said that they are all their life time subject to bondage through the fear of death; for a dreadful state of bondage it is to be the slave of one of the greatest terrors. Other fears may pass away, but this fear, if it be not overcome, will haunt us wherever we go, and as long as we live, because we cannot possibly escape from the enemy whom we dread to meet. We may, it is true, escape from the thought of death, and, therefore, from its fear, amidst our business, our occupations, or our pleasures: but all this is only a vain expedient to get rid of unwelcome reflections. Sooner or later we shall be

* Note G.

compelled to think. How then shall we overcome the fear of death? What enabled St. Paul to look forward to it with serenity and confidence? An answer to this question may be readily given. In the concluding verses of this chapter he declares that "God is in Christ, or by Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The apostle here teaches us that our Lord and Saviour, when He stood in our place, was accounted as a sinner, and, therefore, He was condemned. On the other hand, we for His sake, and through His atoning merits, are accounted as *righteous*, and, therefore, we are justified, we are acquitted, and delivered from all condemnation. Thus the innocent was punished as though He had been guilty, that the guilty might be rewarded as though they had been innocent; as though they had never sinned at all. When we fully understand this blessed truth of the Gospel, and when its influence extends to the whole of our conduct, we may meet death without fear, even as a conquered enemy. It is on the Rock of Ages that we must rest our hope in the prospect of our last great change. Though faith and repentance, though prayer and watchfulness are all necessary, yet it is not our repentance, it is not our faith, it is not our obedience, apart from Christ, that can quiet an accusing conscience. We want to be certain that we are safe, and that *certainty* of assurance we cannot have from our

own obedience, since our best obedience is imperfect, and an imperfect obedience God will not accept as the foundation of our hope,—as the ground of our justification, and acquittal from the curse of His holy law. We must, therefore, turn to Him who hath magnified the law in our stead, and made it honourable, and whose transcendent worthiness is more than sufficient to atone for our unworthiness. We must not only follow His example, but rest ourselves for time and for eternity on His meritorious sufferings and death. If we thus seek salvation at the foot of the cross, and in a diligent use of the appointed means of grace, then we shall dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we shall be one with Christ, and Christ with us; and the very instant that our union with this world is dissolved, we shall ascend to take possession of the inheritance that awaits us in a better world. And of this our final blessedness we may even now enjoy the assured hope. We read that one great purpose of Christ's coming into the world was to deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. It is evident, then, that there is a peace of conscience attainable which would enable us to pass all our days in a state of liberty. Why should not each man nightly retire to rest with the same views and feelings as he would wish to have in the immediate prospect of his dissolution? Ah, brethren, we may judge of the weakness of our faith by the imperfect effects which it has hitherto produced. If we could all

repeat, with humble confidence, the words of the apostle in the text, as our own; if we could all enter into the full meaning of what we say when we express our belief "in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting," how different we should be from what we are! We should answer more closely to the description given of the first Christians; one thought would be uppermost, the glorious kingdom of which we are the heirs, and which is reserved for us in heaven. Such, undoubtedly, would be the effects of true faith in vigorous exercise. It is this belief which turns a barren assent of the understanding into a lively and steady principle of action. It is true that in our present condition we cannot be completely and absolutely indifferent to earthly things, but comparatively we may be. We must learn to live above the world even while we are occupied about the affairs of the world, by recalling to our recollection that an inheritance of endless glory will soon be our portion if we are true believers in Christ. It is, indeed, most difficult to keep the mind steadily fixed on the prize which faith holds up to our view; and this very difficulty,—our unwillingness to direct our thoughts to those scenes which futurity veils from our sight, ought to convince us how necessary it is to use all the means which are prescribed for our advancement in holiness. Spiritual subjects will pass from the mind, and leave but a feeble impression, unless we strive to keep it alive by the exercise of faith and hope,—*by devout* meditation, by the diligent study of the

Word of God, and above all, by fervent and persevering prayer. O, then, brethren, let none of us be satisfied with a mere outward profession of belief in Christ if our conduct is inconsistent with the holiness of the Gospel. Such a belief will never effectually deliver us from the fear of death: "A lively faith," as one of our Church Articles teaches us, "is known by works, even as a tree is discerned by its fruit." Every tree has its own proper fruit, and faith has fruits peculiar to itself, some of which I have now mentioned. Where these fruits are found, there is positive evidence of real faith in the Saviour; and if we possess it, we may look forward to the approach of death calmly, fearlessly, and even joyfully. For come when it may—after long and painful illness, or without notice or forewarning, like a thief in the night, it will not take us by surprise. Firm and strong in reliance on our Almighty Redeemer, at His command we shall be ready, and into His hands we shall commend our departing spirit, in sure and certain hope that we shall have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Many, in our own days as well as in ancient times, have borne their testimony to the efficacy of true religion in their last moments. Let *us* follow their faith, their patience, their humility, their obedience, and our end will be like theirs. St. Paul could say of himself, "I die daily." He familiarised himself to the thoughts of death daily, and, therefore, it had no terrors for him. Men in *general do* that well which they have practised

long; who, then, is so likely to acquit himself well in dying as he who has learnt to die daily? With him the bitterness of death is past, or if the frail flesh shrinks from the thought of dissolution, he will not want consolations to support him, and render him victorious in this his last conflict. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." If we are, indeed, His obedient children, we may confidently expect that when we come to the end of our course we shall have such help and consolation as only the dying need. God's grace and heavenly aid are always proportioned to our necessities, and what necessities are equal to those of a dying hour? What He has done for others He will do for us also, and the doubts and fears with which some of us may now be troubled will, at last, disperse like mists before the rising sun. We must, however, be on our guard against self-deception. It is possible for a man to imagine that all is right with him when all may be wrong. Many wicked persons appear to die in peace, though they have never truly repented of their sins, or given any evidence of a renewed heart or real faith in Christ. But we must remember how often it happens that a man's conscience seems to be at peace, and to give him no pain or uneasiness, merely because it is a slumbering conscience, and has never been roused from its lethargy. If we ground our judgment on the unerring declarations of Scripture, we shall be in no danger of mistaking a careless, unrepenting sinner for a faithful servant of God. As a mortified limb gives no pain, so a

dead conscience feels no smart, no sorrow for sin, no apprehension of God's wrath. We ought to bear in mind, my brethren, that the happiness of heaven is the continuation and perfection of those holy tempers and dispositions which are formed upon earth. Is it to be believed, then, that a few distracted prayers uttered in our last illness, after a life of carelessness, irreligion, and sin, will be sufficient to prepare us for the employments of the heavenly world, and for the society of the saints and angels who surround the throne of God? Many years are thought necessary for a man to learn a common trade, or mechanical art; and no one can be qualified for his profession in life, whatever it may be, without previous toil and study. Reason itself may teach us that the time to secure for ourselves the blessed hope of everlasting life is not just when we are on the brink of the grave. It is true we cannot set limits to the mercy of God, but in general the sincerity of a death-bed repentance is very questionable. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and how can we be sure that we possess it if we neglect to seek it in earnest till we are just about to leave the world? Our only safety is to improve the present hour, and make haste to flee from the wrath to come. If any one would possess the joyful hope by which the great apostle was animated, let him at once lay aside every weight and the sins which do most easily beset him;—let him at once resolve in dependence on God's grace to strive earnestly for his *soul's salvation.* It is only in this way we can *prove that* our faith is sincere, and that we are

heirs of that inheritance which God has prepared for them that love Him.

If any among us have not yet taken shelter beneath the cross of Christ, O, that they would consider how great is their danger, and be persuaded to accept, without delay, the precious blessings which God is so willing to bestow! Though their transgressions be great and manifold; though they may have sinned against their better judgment,—against the checks of conscience, and the warnings of God's ministers, yet still their iniquities may be blotted out, for there is virtue in the blood of Christ to cleanse us from all sin. Our heavenly Father continues to invite and to entreat, though His invitations may have all been unheeded for a long course of years. Though all His threatenings may have been disregarded, He still follows each careless sinner with the same gracious command, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." If you humbly and attentively listen to this command, He will enable you to comply with it; the drowsiness of the soul will speedily pass away, and the cold heart will become warm with the life, and love, and liberty which the first followers of our Lord possessed. And, then, in the midst of this world's temptations, troubles, and perplexities, you shall see your way clear to the heavenly Jerusalem, and its eternal mansions of bliss; the brightness of God's presence will rest, as it were, on your heads, and "the Good Shepherd" Himself will be your *Guide* and Protector through the valley and shadow *of death.*

SERMON VIII.

Philippians iii. 20, 21.

"FOR OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN; FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, THAT IT MAY BE FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING WHEREBY HE IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF."

No article of our belief is revealed more clearly, or established on surer grounds, than the doctrine of the resurrection. It is true we need the lamp of faith to guide us through the gloomy chambers of death, or we shall find nothing there to give us hope or consolation.* Wise and thoughtful men among the heathen guessed that there might be a future life, but none of them ever dreamed of a resurrection. And though the Jews had a brighter hope, and could discover glimpses of a joyful resur-

* PROFESSOR HEURTLEY.

rection to eternal life, yet even they were in comparative ignorance of what has been fully revealed to us in the Gospel of Christ. On us, my brethren, "the day-spring from on high" has shed its light, and we know and are sure that our blessed Redeemer has passed into the heavens as our forerunner; for the grave could not hold Him captive, and His own resurrection sets the question for ever at rest whether a resurrection be possible or not. However incredible it might once have appeared, we know now that it has actually taken place.* This is the great miracle, the thought of which is so full of comfort to the faithful Christian on the bed of sickness and death. He who has so gloriously triumphed over death and the grave, will not fail, either in the will or the power, to change our humiliated bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. Here is, indeed, a subject for wonder and admiration. What change the body of our Lord underwent when He ascended to Heaven we are not informed, but we know that it shines forth with all the brightness and splendour which are appropriate to Him as the Son of God; and when He appears again, all His followers shall be arrayed in the same garments of light and immortality. Although we know not what we shall be, yet we are certain that the body which is sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, shall be raised in incorruption, and glory and power. Its form and appearance will be like that of the Saviour

* Note H.

Himself as He was seen on the Mount of Transfiguration, and afterwards by Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, exceeding in brightness the sun at noon-day. At present it is a frail and humiliated body;* it is a great clog and hindrance to the soul in holy exercises; and between the helplessness of infancy, and the infirmities of old age, how short is the period of man's prime and vigour! But when raised and glorified it will need no cessation from the blissful employments of the heavenly world, and, like the angels, it may be rendered capable of services of which we can form no conception in our present imperfect state.

Now, in order to fix our hopes on sure ground the apostle directs our attention to the Almighty power of our Lord, "whereby He is able to subdue all things to himself." "For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;" and His own resurrection, as I said before, is the sure pledge of the resurrection of His saints, for "he is become the first fruits of them that slept." The promises of God on this subject are alone sufficient to satisfy every sincere Christian. He walks "by faith, not by sight." But yet there are things on earth, seen and close at hand, which may convince us that something like a resurrection takes place every year. Let us look, for instance, at the bare and seemingly dead branches of the trees in winter, and then let us survey those trees when clothed with

* The body of our humiliation.—Gr.

the luxuriant prodigality of their leaves and blossoms in the summer. Do we not here see a most marvellous change, a change beautifully emblematical of our own resurrection? The darkness of each night may be compared to the darkness of the grave, and the return of each day may be said to point out the morning of the resurrection. A grain of wheat is sown in the ground, and to all appearance dies; but after a while it springs up again, substantially the same, though in a different form. An unsightly root is put into the earth, and, in a few months, we see it transformed into a splendid flower. An apparently dead worm, after a short season of concealment, suddenly bursts its shell and becomes a gay inhabitant of air. Now, with these and various other displays of Almighty power before our eyes, why should we doubt the possibility of a future resurrection, or of the change which is to take place in the bodies of the saints at the advent of their Saviour? *

This was the happiness which the first Christians ever kept in view, and for the attainment of which they laboured with unwearied earnestness. "Our conversation," says the apostle, "is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The word conversation here does not mean discourse, or talk, but citizenship.† The true Christian is described as a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth. He is like a citizen of some far distant city, dwelling, for a season, in a foreign

* Note I. † πολίτευμα.

country, in a country ill-suited to his feelings, and unfriendly to his real welfare. He takes but a transient interest in the scenes around him, and his mind is often busy in anticipating the joys which await him when he reaches his native land. Such, more or less, are the feelings of the faithful servants of God during their earthly pilgrimage. It is under this figure that their condition is frequently represented. They are as travellers in a strange country; for though in the world, yet, like their Lord and Master, "they are not of the world." The world is not their home. "Here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come,"—"a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." They believe, without a doubt, that the day is approaching when they shall "rise to the life immortal," and "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Let us ask ourselves, brethren, are we, in truth, aspiring after this blessedness? Are we shunning all that is inconsistent with it? While depending wholly on the merits and mediation of our Redeemer for pardon, peace, and acquittal from condemnation, are we endeavouring, by the grace of God, to "walk as he walked," perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord? None are warranted to entertain the hope of a joyful resurrection, who do not answer, in some degree, to this character.

I observe, lastly, that if we could always keep in mind the grandeur of our destiny as true believers in Christ, this vain world would not have so strong a *hold upon* our affections. Our very hearts would

burn within us at the contemplation of our happiness, and we should long, and earnestly pray for "the full manifestation of the sons of God." If the man of the world rejoices too much in his fleeting pleasures, the opposite fault of the sincere Christian is that he rejoices too little in the prospect of his future inheritance,—in the thought and anticipation of the bliss that awaits him at the coming of his Saviour. The apostles and primitive disciples knowing that they were "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," felt like persons overcome with amazement at the greatness of their privileges. Why do we so seldom witness such happiness now? In truth, we all have need to pray for an increase of faith. How little during the twenty-four hours of the day does the subject of the resurrection occupy our thoughts? How faint an impression does it produce in comparison of what we should feel if we expected, at no distant period, to come into possession of vast estates to which we had an undoubted title! In an age like the present when religious profession abounds, it is very apt to lose in warmth and earnestness what it gains in extent. O let us all remember that we cannot keep the heavenly prize steadily in view without watchfulness and fervent prayer; nor can we experience the joys of the Gospel in their fulness and perfection, unless we are striving to live in a state of constant preparation for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES.

Note A.—Page 27.

"I seem to acquire little new knowledge on any subject, compared to that which I acquire concerning man. This subject is inexhaustible. I have lately read Colquhoun's Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, and Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism. When we, preachers, draw pictures of human nature in the pulpit, we are told that we calumniate it. Calumniate it! Let such censurers read these writers, and confess that we are novices in painting the vices of the heart. All of us live to make discoveries of the evils of the heart, not of its virtues. All our new knowledge of human nature is occupied with its evils."—Rev. R. Cecil's *Remains*, p. 314.

Note B.—Page 29.

"The very name of creature includes the condition of universal subjection to the Creator. This condition Adam designed to desert, and free himself from. He would exalt himself out of the state *of service* and obedience to a condition of inde-

pendence, and self-sufficiency, and be as God. But what was the event hereof? Man, by endeavouring to free himself from absolute subjection, and universal service, fell into absolute ruin. For our recovery out of this condition it was needful that the Son of God should become incarnate. He was Lord of all; He had absolute dominion over all,—owed no service, no obedience for Himself, being in the form of God, and equal unto Him. From this state of absolute dominion He descended into a state of absolute service. As Adam sinned and fell by leaving that state of absolute service which was proper to his nature, and inseparable from it, to assume a state of absolute dominion which was not due to him, or consistent with his nature, so the Son of God, being made the second Adam, relieved us by descending from a state of absolute dominion which was due to His nature, to take on Him a state of absolute service which did not belong to Him. He descended as much beneath Himself in His humiliation as Adam designed to ascend above himself in his pride and self-exaltation. Divine wisdom, in this way of our recovery, designed to glorify a state of obedience, and to cast the reproach of the most inexpressible folly on the relinquishment of that state by sin. The world, under the influence of Satan, will not be persuaded that 'the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.' Yea, there is nothing that the most of men do more despise, and scorn, than the *thought* that true wisdom doth consist in faith, *love, and* obedience to the will of God. How is

this their error to be fully exposed and corrected? In the obedience of Christ, the eternal Son of God in our nature, men are upbraided with their folly in relinquishing that state, which, by His wonderful condescension, He hath rendered so desirable, and so glorious. It is the highest demonstration that our nature is not capable of more order, more beauty, more glory, than consists in obedience to God. And that state which we fell into upon our forsaking it, we now know to be full of darkness, confusion, and misery.

"It should further be observed that man could not be delivered from the effects of his disobedience unless the claims of Divine Justice could be fully answered. And this was done in a way that Satan never thought of. For by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God incarnate, there was full satisfaction made to the Justice of God for the sins of man, a reparation of His glory, and an exaltation of His holiness, outbalancing all the dishonour done to it by the first apostasy of mankind."—*Abridged from a Treatise on The Mystery of the Person of Christ, by* Dr. J. Owen, 1679.

"The second Adam saves us because He was 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' His death, being a proof of absolute obedience, is the supreme reparation of the rebellion of Adam. Thus is the harmony re-established between God and man. But while the discord of the moral world is thus resolved by the second Adam, the *condemnation* resulting from sin was as effectually

removed by Him. Here it is that His suffering becomes so important an element in His work. Death had been the consequence of sin. In the language of Scripture 'death is the wages of sin,' —the terrible sanction attached to the law of God, —the solemn vindication of His violated authority. Christ, in submitting to death, submitted to the conditions under which fallen humanity had placed itself; He thus became its true representative..... His death being undeserved was, on His part, a free sacrifice, and an act of perfect obedience; hence its redemptive value. He, the Holy One and the Just, received the wages of transgression, but He yielded Himself to death only to extract its sting; by dying He gained the mightiest of victories over the powers of evil. Having come down to our sin-stained earth, and joined Himself to the human race, He must needs die in spite of His holiness. That holiness, however, at the same time made His death a satisfaction of the Divine Justice,—a reparation of Adam's disobedience. The representative of the sentenced race of man could not save it without submitting to the penalty of sin; but the penalty thus endured is accepted by God as a sufficient reparation, because of the perfect obedience which it manifests."—De Pressense *on The Early Days of Christianity.*

Note C.—Page 37.

"Besides the common word of edification imply*ing it,* we find often, in the Scriptures, that teach-

ing is compared to building; and, amongst other things, the resemblance holds in this, that in both, of necessity, there is a foundation first to be laid, and then the structure to be laid upon it. He that gives rules of life without first fixing principles of faith, offers preposterously to build a house without laying a foundation; and he that instructs what to believe, and directs not a believer how to live, doth in vain lay a foundation without following out the building. But the apostles were not such foolish builders as to sever these two in their labours in the Church. In this Epistle to the Romans we find our apostle excellently acquitting himself in both respects. He first largely and firmly lays the groundwork, and then adds exhortations and directions touching the particular duties of Christians."—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON'S *Expository Lectures*, IV.

NOTE D.—PAGE 50.

A very able writer makes the following remarks on the danger arising from the possession, and the love of riches:

"Unless we were accustomed to read the New Testament from our childhood, I think we should be very much struck with the warnings which it contains, not only against the love of riches, but the very possession of them; we should wonder, with a portion of that astonishment which the *apostles at first* felt, who had been brought up in

the notion that riches were a chief reward which God bestowed on those He loved. As it is, we have heard the most solemn declarations so continually, that we have ceased to attach any distinct meaning to them; or, if our attention is at any time drawn more closely to them, we soon dismiss the subject on some vague imagination that what is said in Scripture had a reference to the particular times when Christ came, without attempting to settle its exact application to us, or whether it has any such application at all.....The most obvious danger which worldly possessions present to our spiritual welfare is, that they become practically a substitute in our hearts for that one object to which our supreme attention is due. They are present with us; God is unseen. They are means at hand, of gaining whatever we may happen to desire. They promise, and are able to be gods to us, and such gods too as require no service, but, like dumb idols, exalt their worshipper, impressing him with a notion of his own power and security. Our Saviour seems to warn us against this danger in His parable of the sower, 'the thorns' being described as 'the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches.' Still more openly does St. Paul speak in his first Epistle to Timothy. 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some *have coveted* after, they have erred from the faith, *and pierced* themselves through with many sor-

rows.'.....It may be added, there is a considerable tendency in occupations connected with gain to make a man unfair in his dealings, that is, in a subtle way. There are so many conventional deceits and prevarications in the details of the world's business, so much intricacy in the management of accounts, so many perplexed questions about justice and equity, so many plausible subterfuges and fictions of law, so much confusion between the distinct and approximating outlines of honesty and civil enactment, that it requires a very straightforward mind to keep firm hold of strict conscientiousness, honour, and truth, in the matters in which he is engaged."

NOTE E.—PAGE 60.

"If thou confessest that thou art in thyself altogether unrighteous, but that thou hopest the righteousness of Christ will be sufficient to answer for all, no doubt Christ's righteousness is abundantly available to all the ends for which it was intended; but it shall never answer all the ends that a foolish, wicked heart will fondly imagine to itself. It serves to excuse thy non-performance of the law of works, and stands instead of thy perfect, sinless obedience to that law; but it serves not instead of thy performance of what is required of thee as the condition of the Gospel covenant, that is, it shall never supply the room of faith, *repentance,* holiness, the loving of Christ above all,

and of God in Him, so as to render these unnecessary, or salvation possible without them. There is not one iota, or tittle in the Bible that so much as intimates that an unregenerate person, an unbeliever, an impenitent, or unholy person, shall be saved by Christ's righteousness, but enough to the contrary, as every one knows that hath the least acquaintance with the Scriptures."—HOWE *on the Blessedness of the Righteous.*

"The Church of Christ is compared to a garden, and true believers to trees planted in it; and the reason why such provision is made for their safety and culture is that they may bring forth fruit. And where there is no fruitfulness, there God's displeasure is manifested, and the threat is heard, 'Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?' Year after year He comes seeking fruit, but how many are there from whom He has sought it in vain! Some there are who are covered with a goodly show of leaves, who make a fair profession, and outward parade of Christianity; who can talk well and wisely about the doctrines of the Gospel, and who at a distance, and at first sight, seem the most flourishing trees in the orchard; but when we come nearer, do we find any fruit to repay the Master's bounty? Let us remember that it is fruit, and not leaves which the Lord seeks on each tree in His garden. By these fruits He is glorified, and we ourselves prove that we are made meet to *be partakers* of the inheritance of the saints in *light.*"—BISHOP HEBER.

NOTE F.—PAGE 67.

"As God Himself has commanded us to pray, it is evident that if we pray aright we cannot pray in vain. He answers prayer in His own time and method, granting us that for which we entreat Him, or withholding the thing which we ask for, and conferring some other blessing instead. Here, then, is our consolation: if we are not answered according to our own request, yet we are answered according to the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father. Under all circumstances it is our duty to pray, but we are not to be anxious about the time and manner in which our prayer is to be answered. We are to repose on God in faith. The answer may be direct, and immediate, or it may be slow and almost imperceptible. The general law is, that we should walk by faith, not by sight; and this shews that there must be patience on our part; for if prayer were uniformly answered in a direct and sensible manner, we could not properly be said to walk by faith. Let us, then, learn to wait patiently and perseveringly upon God. If we do so, all the blessings of the Gospel will be imparted to us really and effectually, though secretly and slowly; and we shall find that 'He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.' "—DEAN MILNER.

NOTE G.—PAGE 89.

"As the soul is immortal so it is highly probable *that it is clothed* with some body, or vehicle, when

it leaves its earthly habitation. This is implied by the apostle when he says that he and his fellow-Christians did groan earnestly for their heavenly body, which they were to take possession of upon the dissolution of their earthly one. The soul was to inhabit the heavenly house as it did then the earthly house of this tabernacle. For he assures us that he did not groan with a bare desire to be unclothed by putting off this body, but with an expectation to be clothed with a better house, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. And that it was not meant of the resurrection is plain from what follows, when he tells us that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, but that when we go from the body, we go where He is, to be present with Him. Whenever angels have become visible, they have appeared as men. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to suppose that the disembodied spirit will also appear in the angelic form."—FLEMING'S *Christology*, 1705.

"The disembodied happy spirit, after death, is possessed of an ethereal form like that of the angels. Its ultimate destination, however, is to be a re-embodiment on the day of the resurrection, in order that it may fully triumph over death."—BROUGHTON *on The Spirit Disembodied.*

"If we suppose Paradise to be rich in the characters of sublimity and beauty such as could be *taken* cognizance of by means of organs of sense *like ours*, how can they be apprehended by spirits

divested of them? And yet we cannot think either that a place presented to us under the name and image of Paradise can be without some such fair attributes, or that they can be lost on the perceptions of disembodied spirits happily located there. There arises a suggestion whether, in order to a perceptive intimacy with the material characters of the place, it be not necessary that the spirit be invested with some material vehicle to replace the gross mortal body which it has abandoned. And it is an allowable conjecture that it may have such a medium of perception and action during the interval of waiting for the resurrection."—*Correspondence of the* REV. JOHN FOSTER.

According to the author of the "Night Thoughts,"

—"Angels are but men in lighter habit clad."

We have every reason to believe, with the writers here quoted, that the spirits of the righteous after death are enshrined in some ethereal vehicle suited to their new condition. It has been justly observed that we do not know the complete meaning of the term material. We really know not wherein the elements of matter consist. We know some of its properties; but we are unacquainted with its essence: it may possess attributes, or assume forms, or be resolvable into an infinite subtilty which our senses cannot recognise, and our power of thought cannot conceive. Few consider how little we know of its capabilities, or that it exists under ever new, *and varying* forms of combination.

NOTE H.—PAGE 98.

"The resurrection of Christ doth not only prove by way of example, but hath a force in it to command belief of a future general resurrection. The saints are endued with his Spirit, and thereby their bodies are become the temples of the Holy Ghost: and, therefore, if they be destroyed, they shall be raised again. 'For if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, he which raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.'"—Rom. viii. 11.—BISHOP PEARSON *on the Creed.*

"By our Lord's resurrection, the verity of His doctrines, and the validity of His promises concerning the future state of men, are demonstrated in a way most cogent and most pertinent. Any miracle notoriously true, doth indeed suffice to confirm any point of good doctrine; but a miracle in kind, or involving the matter contested, hath a peculiar efficacy to that purpose: so did our Lord's resurrection in a way of palpable instance, with all possible evidence to sense, directly prove the possibility of our resurrection, together with all points of doctrine coherent thereto."—DR. ISAAC BARROW.

NOTE I.—PAGE 100.

"*The* course of variations in the natural world *renders* the resurrection most highly probable.

Every space of twenty-four hours teacheth thus much, in which there is always a revolution amounting to a resurrection. The day dies into night, and is buried in silence and in darkness; in the next morning it appeareth again, and reviveth, opening the grave of darkness, rising from the dead of night: this is a diurnal resurrection. As the day dies into the night, so doth the summer into winter; the sap is said to descend into the root, and there it lies buried in the ground; the earth is covered with snow, or crusted with frost, and becomes a general sepulchre: when the spring appeareth, all begin to rise; the plants and flowers peep out of their graves, revive, and grow, and flourish: this is the annual resurrection. The corn by which we live, and for want of which we perish with famine, is notwithstanding cast upon the earth, and buried in the ground, with a design that it may corrupt, and being corrupted may revive and multiply; our bodies are fed by this constant experiment, and we continue this present life by a succession of resurrections. Thus all things are repaired by corrupting, are preserved by perishing, and revived by dying; and can we think that man, the lord of all these things which thus die and revive for him, should be detained in death as never to live again? Is it imaginable that God should thus restore all things to man, and not restore man to Himself? If there were no other consideration but of the natural revolutions, and resurrections, of the creatures, it were abundantly sufficient *to render* the resurrection of our bodies highly *probable.*"—Bishop Pearson.

"The patriarch Job looked forward to the resurrection with undoubting confidence. 'I know,' said he, 'that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' My death, which must take place many ages before His appearance, will not exclude me from my share in His redemption: for though nothing will be then remaining of my external person,—though the form of this body will have been long destroyed,—the organization of its constituent parts demolished, and its very substance dissipated; notwithstanding this ruin of my outward fabric, the immortal principle within me shall not only survive, but be re-united to a body of which the organs will not only connect it with the external world, but serve to cement its union with its Maker. For in my flesh, with the corporeal eye, with the eye of the immortal body which I shall then assume, I shall see the Divine Majesty in the person of the glorified Redeemer."
—Bishop Horsley.

I. E. Chillcott, Steam Press, Bristol.